

PLAYSTATION 4 | PS3 | PSVITA | PSN

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EDITION



PS4

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× FIFA 14 × KNACK × THIEF
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The UK's only independent PlayStation magazine



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Generation Next



Talk about being thrown in at the deep end. My first issue on **Play** and already, I've been tasked with unearthing every single

in-development and rumoured PlayStation 4 release, as well as breaking down those borderline impenetrable tech specs to work out exactly what they mean for those who don't speak jargon. Oh, and all the while I've had to keep the mag ticking over and start preparing (physically and mentally) for the busiest, most exciting E3 in years. Luke Albigés – he only does everything.

Only I don't, obviously. In fact, the Good Ship **Play** would be a wreck were it not for the rest of its capable crew. The writers that selflessly pour hours into terrible games so that you don't have to; the subs what does tidies up all our writes to make they better to read; the designers that make the whole thing so deliciously easy on the eye. It's one big collaborative effort in the name of PlayStation and we've assembled a brilliant team to bring you the best possible coverage of this, the most enthralling time for PlayStation gaming in recent memory.

To this end, we've gone behind the scenes on the games that will really push the PlayStation 3 to its limits – titles like *Beyond*, *Battlefield 4* and *Dark Souls II* – as well as those that are ushering in a whole new era. A new generation, if you will. PS3 has come of age, Vita is going from strength to strength and PS4 gets more interesting with every passing day. So complain as I may about the deep end, it'll all be worth it in the end. And in any case, I'd never have thought that drowning would be anywhere near this exciting...

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Your gateway to the esoteric world of PlayStation



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Absolutely the right way to do it.

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EXCLUSIVELY ON YOUR DISC



PLAYSTATION 4: THE BIG FOUR

The team runs through four of the most impressive and most exciting titles so far announced for Sony's new console. Which will we pick?

UNREAL ENGINE 4 DETAILED

Epic gives us a guided tour of its stunning new engine, with insight into what the new tech will mean for next-gen games.



IN-DEPTH VIDEO REVIEWS

Metro: Last Light, Injustice: Gods Among Us, Persona 4 Arena and Dead Island: Riptide all go under the microscope.

NEXT-GEN HORROR!

Bethesda and Tango Gameworks join forces for *The Evil Within*, a next-gen horror game from the creator of *Resident Evil*. Sold!



SEE THE BACK PAGE FOR MORE!



PLAYSTATION

Presenting every single PlayStation 4 game announced so far

△ THE SPECS EXPLAINED ○ THE GAMES REVEALED × THE INDUSTRY REACTION □

△×○□ It's real. It's coming. And you want one. PlayStation 4 is set to be a significant leap forward in terms of power and connectivity over not just PS3 but everything else out there, but some people seem to be so busy arguing about the tech specs and details that they seemingly didn't take the time to look into what any of it meant first.

With that in mind, we decided to put together this article, a complete breakdown of what those impressive specs mean to the average gamer and a

rundown of every single confirmed release, safe bet and rumoured game looking to arrive on the new platform. It's all right here. We don't care how many quadrashits of data the new hardware can toss around. And you don't need to us wax lyrical about why a faster USB port will help Sony win the next-gen war. It's all about the games, so that's what you're going to get from us – no-nonsense analysis of gameplay potential and new play experiences. It's time to get excited...



ATION4



DRIVECLUB

You can look – but for the moment, no touching



ETA TBA | DEV EVOLUTION STUDIOS | PUB SONY

PS4 Announced at Sony's PS4 launch event in February alongside other sparkly new titles like *Killzone: Shadow Fall* and, er, *Diablo III*, *Driveclub* is a first-person racer from Sony's Evolution Studios – the good people who brought the *Motorstorm* series skidding, tumbling and exploding onto PS3 back in 2007. But don't let that track record fool you – *Driveclub*'s not about recklessly running people off the road and hooting as they spin out in a slow-mo tangle of fire and broken limbs. If *Motorstorm* is your mate's Toyota Supra with pulsing under-car neons, then *Driveclub* is a fastidious uncle with an old, racing green MG that he keeps under a dust cover, and only ever brings out on cloudless Sunday afternoons. And only then to wax the bodywork and check the tyre pressure. This is refined, grown-up, proper car-fan driving. And if you kids don't like it, you can get off *Driveclub*'s lawn.

In every way, *Driveclub* is a textbook launch title: hammering home the new features that the PS4 can bring to the table to make the game bigger and shinier than what was possible on the PS3. To that end, what we've seen of the game – in terms of pure visuals – looks spectacular.

From the frustratingly limited gameplay footage available, you can see the way the scenery reflects off the bodywork of the cars as they drive, the way the light catches metal detailing of the rear indicator lights, and what look like proper, working wing mirrors. Now, you might not be the sort of person who regularly gets excited about wing

mirrors, but that's pretty much exactly the sort of nerdy detail we like about *Driveclub*. We're sexy like that. When it comes to faithfully recreating each of the cars, the game is almost fetishistic in its attention to detail. *Driveclub*'s creative lead, Matt Southern, spoke on stage at the PS4 conference about how the developer has "gone borderline insane with real-world details and subtleties", and he wasn't wrong.

"The vehicles are as close you'll get to the real thing," says Southern, slightly disparagingly. But he may be right. The carbon fibre patterning on the cars has been modelled as a weave rather than a flat texture, so that the light glints off it realistically. The headlights are built as they would be on the shop floor: a hyper-accurate assembly of bulbs, reflectors and lenses. The suede and carpet interiors have what Southern calls a "fibre direction map". We don't know what that is, but we bet Colin McRae didn't have one.

The other big point Evolution Studios is keen to hit over and over again is *Driveclub*'s vast social capabilities – and by proxy, those of the PS4. In fact, in lieu of much actual footage, discussion of how *Driveclub* will make take advantage of our new "permanently-connected social lives" makes up most of the pitch – to the point where the game's online focus leaves a slightly awkward question mark hanging over how the game will work in a purely single-player capacity. What happens if we don't want to play with others? What if nobody wants to play with us? OH GOD IT'S SUMMER CAMP ALL OVER AGAIN.



ΔOX□ Evolution says it is working with the greatest car companies there are on *Driveclub*. We've seen no evidence to the contrary so far.



What makes this game great?



It's a thoroughbred from the developers of the *Motorstorm* series.



The attention to detail – each car is obsessively, painstakingly recreated.



The vehicles. Evolution promise only the finest supercars for us to prang.



Tournaments can involve hundreds of drivers at once, just like the M1.



ΔΟΧΕ Pictured: exciting wing mirrors on cars so expensive that we'll never be able to afford one in our lifetime. This will have to do...

Fortunately, the social features in question translate into more than just multiplayer racing. By having players team up to drive in clubs (see what they did there?) rather than every-driver-for-themselves dashes to the finish, *Driveclub*'s experience is designed to be more accessible and enjoyable for players who don't have the experience and reflexes to snag first place. Southern compares the *Driveclub* experience to squad-based online shooters, in which the greener, lower-scoring players still come away with bragging rights if their team comes out on top. Personal glory here isn't as important as in a traditional racer – in *Driveclub*, racing is a team sport. Which sounds ever so nice, albeit something that will take a little bit of getting used to.

The other big social media pull is the ability to set up tournaments for others to compete in. Tournaments are strings of challenges that can be completed either in real-time or asynchronously, with players setting tracks, weather conditions and times of day to test other teams' racing chops. We don't know the ins and outs of how this will work as yet, but Evolution is promising tournaments with thousands of racers and hundreds of teams competing at once. However that works out in practice, there's no denying the ambition.

As a tech demo for what the PS4 is capable of, then, *Driveclub* is looking like an exciting prospect – for fans of massive online multiplayer and beautifully-rendered suede interiors alike. But you don't judge a book by its

cover (although, of course, we all do really – it's why Penguin has a marketing department), and herein lies our only niggle with *Driveclub* thus far: we know next to nothing about how it plays.

Compared to the seven-odd minutes of *Killzone* gameplay that preceded it at the PS4 conference, all we have to go on for *Driveclub* is 30 seconds of heavily edited trailer footage. We've no sense of the feel of the cars, the variety of the courses, or how the social integration and team play will work in practice. We don't know anything at all about the single-player experience – unnerving for the bitter, unsociable curmudgeons like some of us for whom the thought of other people's shared enjoyment provokes only hatred and howling spiritual torment. At the time of writing, all we really know about the

gameplay is that the cars go forwards and it controls in first-person.

That's absolutely not to suggest there's anything sinister afoot – if there were ever a safe pair of hands to take the wheel of a racer, it's those of Evolution Studios – and we'd expect to see a lot more of *Driveclub* at this year's E3. But what it does mean is that, for the moment, *Driveclub* is an unknown quantity. A very pretty unknown quantity made by a team that's very good at what they do, but nevertheless: until we see someone actually take it for a spin, *Driveclub* is still just a very sexy book jacket. 

Driveclub is being developed by Sony's Evolution Studios. You can read more about its announcement on the US PlayStation blog: blog.us.playstation.com/2013/02/20/racing-evolves-on-playstation-4-with-driveclub

READ ME *Driveclub* is a hyper-realistic first-person racer with a trainspotter's devotion to its vehicles.

ΔOX□ We're going to enjoy smashing these cars to realistic pieces. Or feel horribly guilty. We still can't work out which.

ΔOX□ Car models are absurdly detailed. Millions will die checking out the grain of the seat leather or staring endlessly into grills and headlights.

In The Clubhouse

Play hitches a ride with directors Matt Southern and Col Rodgers plus group technical director Scott Kirkland to find out what is going on under Driveclub's hood

You've said this is the kind of game that Evolution has wanted to make for years – is there the same level of passion for simulation as there is for arcade racing at the studio, then?

MS: Absolutely. Simulation is where we started life. We made 5 WRC simulation games for the PlayStation 2 and our founders all made flight simulations like *Eurofighter Typhoon* and *F-29 Retaliator*. Two members of our team used to be simulator designers at BAE Systems, the British aerospace and defence company. With *Driveclub* we're really trying to move beyond those racing categorisations and come up with something that all players can get into by combining everything we've done before. No small challenge!

Overall, how did you feel the PS4 conference went down with the industry and the press? What was the experience like for you personally, to be part of it?

MS: All my life I've been excited by new console announcements, to see what innovations the next generation will bring. This one really reflected how we're changing as an industry, recognising the new priorities and philosophies needed to keep console gaming significant. As for me, I loved being a part of it. Part of me couldn't quite believe I was backstage in a 'green room' with Guerrilla, Media Molecule, Bungie, Quantic Dream, Capcom and everyone else. Plus we were all so supportive of each other. I'll never forget it.

Can you describe what kind of role you got to play in creating the PS4 hardware and the DualShock 4?

SK: Evolution's first involvement with PS4 dates back to February 2008 – over five years ago – with Mark Cerny and first-party peers attending GDC 2008 in San Francisco. Unfortunately we were on the wrong side of the Atlantic at the time, working hard on *MotorStorm: Pacific Rift*, so we had to secretly call in from the UK at midnight. The agenda included technical and experiential ambitions for the platform and our games, the importance of developer accessibility and preliminary direction for hardware architecture.

We started looking at the DualShock 4 around Christmas 2010 when Shuhei Yoshida introduced us to the Japanese hardware engineers tasked with enhancing the iconic DualShock controller. Early prototypes – which wouldn't have looked out of place on the set of a Christopher Nolan *Batman* movie – were demonstrated and discussed before handmade samples and supporting PS3 libraries were shipped to our team early in 2011.

Over the following 18 months, a small group of programmers and designers from Evolution tackled a variety of interesting input prototypes to assess the pros and cons of prospective hardware features in the quest for the ultimate controller. Highlights of the process include travelling to Japan in September 2011 and San Francisco in March 2012 to showcase work such as enhanced

analogue stick support in *MotorStorm: RC* (which drew an admiring and competitive crowd), motion steering in *Driveclub* (cementing the case for high speed gyros in the controller), touch UI navigation, voice control, and text entry.

How important is photorealism for both the future of graphics on PS4 and Driveclub?

CR: With every release of a new console, players want greater realism and better graphics. The concept of photorealism is the perceptual target we're all aiming for and PS4 brings us a lot closer to that target, making it easier for us to draw people into our games and to suspend their disbelief.

With *Driveclub*, we're producing a game awash with cinematic realism – with huge quantities of particles, authentic atmospheric effects, and unparalleled attention to detail for the cars and the world and everything in it.

How does the PS4's technology help when it comes to simulating the experience of a racing game? What can you do now that you couldn't do five years ago?

SK: We're much more focused on the emotive experience of owning and racing amazingly desirable vehicles and challenging players with competitive and collaborative events than with simulation, although we do go to great lengths to demonstrate our incredible attention to detail.



Evolution has always had a reputation for spectacular visuals, and with the help of the PS4's powerful and feature-rich GPU (which retains PlayStation's hallmark exposure of powerful low level access), *Driveclub* is no exception. Working with physically based materials, we've painstakingly recreated vehicle details such as woven carbon fibre, oily headlight lenses, flecked metallic paint and leather stitching; bringing the cars to life with a diverse array of rich environments that extend from detailed driving surfaces through dense roadside grass and scrub to memorable landmarks, stunning skies, and staggering vistas.

Combined with driver animations, dynamic lighting for time of day and cinematic post processing, it looks awesome! Much more important to us though, given the inherently social nature of the game, is the integration with new overarching system software and platform features such as video streaming, spectating and activity feeds. This fusion of game and platform wasn't possible five years ago, and it will really enhance players' social entertainment experiences on PS4. The DualShock 4 controller has also evolved and it's helping us to raise our experiential bar too. Enhanced triggers allow greater control

of acceleration and braking, stiffer springs and smaller deadzones in the sticks improve vehicle control, high speed gyros provide a natural and responsive motion steering experience, fully programmable rumble motors provide enhanced tactile feedback and the touch pad provides more intuitive UI navigation.

Overall, what do you think the state of the racing genre is on consoles today?

MS: On PS2, when I joined the industry, a racing game would sit at the top of the charts every Christmas and we ruled the roost. On PS3, online multiplayer grew and grew, and racing games struggled to offer the group experience that a *FIFA* or *COD* can offer. So it has fallen behind. On PS4 we aim to take racing back to the top with *Driveclub*.

Sony has *Gran Turismo* as a flagship racing simulator – what is *Driveclub* doing to differentiate itself?

CR: If *Gran Turismo* is a 106-piece orchestra, *Driveclub* is a rock band with distorted guitars putting on a massive stage show for a stadium crowd. We're not motorsport or engineering, we're united in speed on roads in the real world, having fun and impressing our friends.

EA has two studios working on alternate *Need For Speed* projects. Microsoft has two studios working on *Forza* titles. Do you think Sony is looking to get some regularity on sim-based racing titles?

MS: Evolution takes a different philosophy; we try to show what PlayStation is capable of, whilst doing our best to introduce brand new, exciting experiences. If we're not 'First or Best', we're not happy.

How integral is social interactivity to the core of the *Driveclub* experience?

CR: Social interactivity is the core of the *Driveclub* experience. We're building a game that could never have been realised on previous generations of consoles, one which builds a closely networked community of clubs in the game as opposed to a notional community of followers around the game.

Do you look to other racers for inspiration when it comes to social or online features?

MS: I'm obsessed with ideas about where to take inspiration from for racing, and like to go as broad as possible: Movies like *Senna* and *Drive*, scholarly ideas like flow theory, racing games on tablets and mobiles, and of course console racing games. **AOXO**

CONFIRMED GAMES

ASSASSIN'S CREED IV: BLACK FLAG

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT

ETA: LAUNCH

AOXO The most ambitious AC yet, a fully open world is something of a sea change (pun fully intended) from the usual template. And with Ubisoft throwing around exactly the kind of buzzwords we want to hear – bigging up challenge, freedom and depth as it has been – we can't wait to get our hands on it. Also, pirates.

HYPE TRAIN

AAAAAA

THE HYPE TRAIN

AAAAAA

Day one must-have

AAAAA

Looking great

AAA

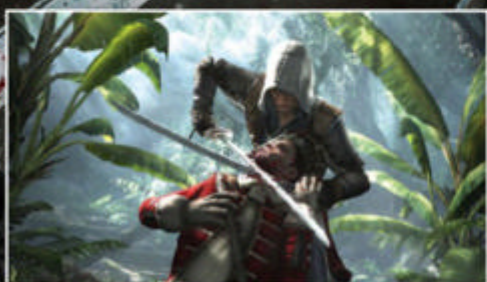
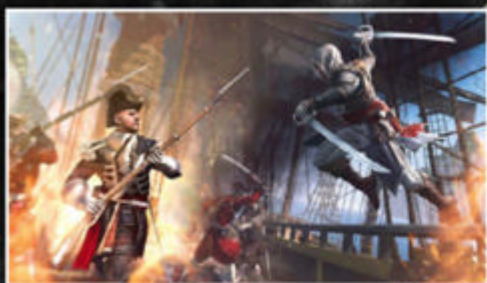
One to watch

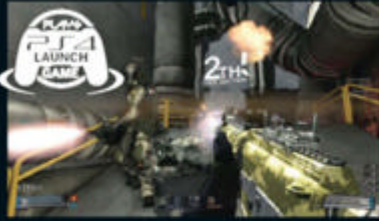
AA

Dark horse

A

Meh





BLACKLIGHT: RETRIBUTION

DEVELOPER: ZOMBIE STUDIOS
ETA: LAUNCH

AOXO A free-to-play shooter is an interesting thing to announce, if only since it potentially indicates a shift in focus and direction for Sony's online service. Could it be that there'll be a greater number of free games like PC sensation *League Of Legends*? And what would this mean for paid downloads? Only time will tell...

HYPE TRAIN



DEEP DOWN

DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
ETA: Q3 2014

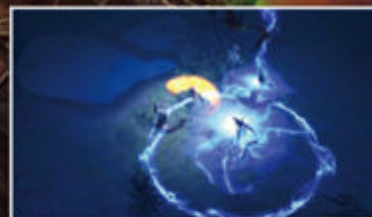
AOXO Excitable Capcom loony Yoshinori Ono has said that a new IP was seen as a better way of testing the next-gen waters than the established trappings of something like *Street Fighter*. It's a fantasy RPG and spiritual successor to *Dragon's Dogma*, plus those dragons (and the fire... THE FIRE!) look pretty damn incredible on PS4.

HYPE TRAIN



“Price will be very important. Last cycle, Sony really hurt itself with its \$599 US launch price. Even though it had the most powerful system, consumers weren't interested at that price point, especially when considering the system lacked sufficient exclusive titles to win back market share from Microsoft”

Eric Handler, analyst,
MKM Partners



DIABLO III

DEVELOPER: BLIZZARD
ETA: LAUNCH

AOXO At first, we were a little underwhelmed to hear that Blizzard's big announcement was a year-old action-RPG. Then we remembered that *Diablo III* was, in fact, bloody brilliant. In any case, the Blizzard deal is big news – bring *World Of Warcraft* to PS4 and that's a next-gen auto-win right there.

HYPE TRAIN



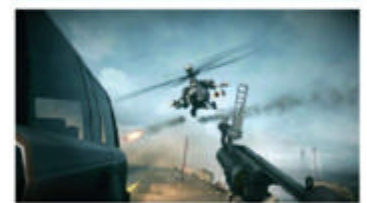
AND THE REST...

Likely, but as-yet unconfirmed

» BATTLEFIELD 4

DICE's new shooter looks absolutely incredible, but why is EA staying quiet about the PS4 version when we already know it's coming?

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» FIFA 14

Another inevitability – even if you made a console yourself out of string and cereal boxes, EA would still announce *FIFA* for it.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» CALL OF DUTY: GHOSTS

Battlefield IS coming, so Activision surely won't let EA have the monopoly on next-gen warfare...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» RAINBOW 6 PATRIOTS

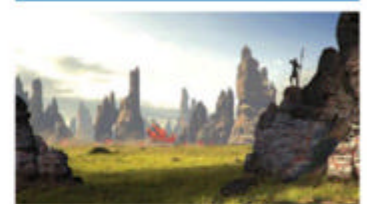
Ubisoft's tactical shooter slipped off the radar some time ago. We called a transition to next gen then, and we still call it now.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» DRAGON AGE III

Already confirmed as a thing (and looking lovely from the leaked assets), all that remains is whether or not it's next-gen. Surely it is...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» DOOM 4

Announced, binned, restarted, canned and now revived once more, *Doom 4* is coming... just don't expect it soon.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» PES 2014

Just as with *COD* and *Battlefield*, there's no way Konami will let EA have the pitch to itself for any length of time.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» MASS EFFECT 4

See *Dragon Age III*. Shepard's saga may be over but EA isn't just going to let this lucrative franchise go...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



KNACK

DEVELOPER: SCE JAPAN

ETA: LAUNCH



ΔOXΔ Thought the next generation was all about photo-realism? Think again. *Knack*'s cartoony visuals take inspiration from Dreamworks and Pixar rather than the real world, while the game itself is a puzzle-platformer where the cute little hero can bond with relics to grow in size, or shrug them off to shrink. Interesting.

HYPE TRAIN



ROCKETBIRDS 2

DEVELOPER: RATLOOP

ETA: LAUNCH



ΔOXΔ A feathery cross between *Shank*, *Contra* and the *Oddworld* games, this is one of the first signs that PSN will be as important to Sony as it is this generation. There'll likely be a new thatgamecompany title as well, but don't expect that to be arriving any time in the next few years. Those guys take their time.

HYPE TRAIN



“We are proud to be a part of this important event and welcome this powerful new console on which we will see many amazing new games”

Johan Strömberg, Bitsquid

DESTINY

DEVELOPER: BUNGIE

ETA: Q3 2014



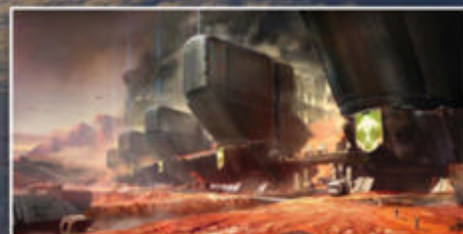
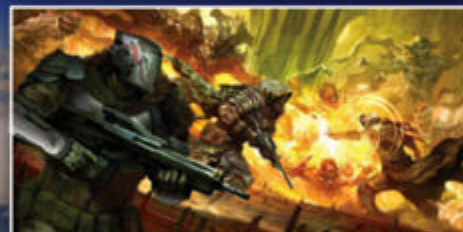
ΔOXΔ The *Halo* developer has finally escaped Microsoft's clutches – its shared world shooter will not only launch simultaneously on all platforms but will also have exclusive PlayStation-only content. Someone get Epic, Rare and Turn10 on the phone and see if they want to make PS4 games too, yeah?

HYPE TRAIN



“The reality is, these new consoles are coming and it was a love connection. That's the easiest way to describe it. We're excited about being as many places as we can with as many players as we can, and Sony really was excited about that too. It made a lot of sense”

Joseph Staten, Bungie



WATCH DOGS

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT

ETA: LAUNCH

ΔOXD While it still isn't clear how much freedom we'll have in turning Chicago's technology against it, the style and relevance of Ubisoft's new IP still makes it an incredibly interesting proposition. As does the teased multiplayer aspect, though we'll probably have to wait for E3 to get the lowdown on that, sadly.

HYPE TRAIN



“When the PS4 showed up, it did bring new possibilities to improve graphics and every AI system we have. But in the same way we did for four years already, we will continue to look beyond what is possible to achieve in order to bring this little something extra out there for players to enjoy”

Jonathan Morin, Ubisoft

CYBERPUNK 2077

DEVELOPER: CD PROJEKT RED

ETA: Q4 2014

ΔOXD Normally, we'd probably have questions about whether a game based on a tabletop RPG is really going to be able to push next-gen hardware. But when CD Projekt Red (that one what did that *Witcher* game) is playing dungeon master, it's safe to expect something pretty spectacular.

HYPE TRAIN



“The main thing I can confirm is that the online vids don't do it justice; it's beautiful”

@mmalex (Alex Evans, Media Molecule)



FINAL FANTASY XV

DEVELOPER: SQUARE ENIX ETA: Q4 2014

ΔOXD Concrete details on the next numbered JRPG sequel are scarce, but rumours abound that either the *Agni's Philosophy* tech demo or the long-MIA *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* (or both) could be being developed into canon series entries. Whether this is true or not, expect next-gen *FF* to look the nuts.

HYPE TRAIN



» UNCHARTED 4

Nathan Drake is the face of PlayStation. And while Naughty Dog might still be busy with *The Last Of Us*, Drake will be at E3. BELIEVE.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» METAL GEAR SOLID V

Confirmed for current-gen consoles only at the time of writing, Kojima's latest beard-wearing headache would look awesome on PS4. Pretty please?

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» UNANNOUNCED QUANTIC DREAM GAME

Beyond is still the main focus, but David Cage has already stated that there's a PS4 project in the works too. Those guys don't tend to rush things, though...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» JUST CAUSE 3

Avalanche keeps tweeting out-of-focus pics of its next project. It looks like *Just Cause*, so it probably is *Just Cause*. But is it next gen?

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» KINGDOM HEARTS III

Tetsuya Nomura once said that Square Enix would work on this once *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* was done. Too bad we'll be dead by then.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» UNTITLED MEDIA MOLECULE PROJECT

The tech shown off by the UK studio was impressive. Whether or not it'll become a real game is another matter entirely.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» DAYZ

Long rumoured to be coming to console, the creator of the hugely popular *ARMA2* mod has apparently already met with Sony to discuss bringing it to PS4.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» UNANNOUNCED ARC FIGHTER

BlazBlue: Chrono Phantasma is due out later this year – will that be the hardcore fighter team's next-gen debut, or will it be something new?

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

KILLZONE: SHADOW FALL

DEVELOPER: GUERILLA

ETA: LAUNCH

ΔOXO Still *the* next-gen game in terms of visuals and impact. We just hope things don't go the same way as they did with *Killzone 2*, which arrived years after launch and looked nothing like its original target footage.

HYPE TRAIN



“ Couple of things. First, ppl who were especially negative about the PS4 unveiling: get a new hobby. You're not a game fan, you're a troll ”

@johnTV (John Ricciardi, 8-4)



“ Despite not actually seeing the device, the impressive hardware specs and incredible-looking games were more than enough to convince fans to secure their console and avoid disappointment when it launches ”

Charlotte Knight, Game

SNIPER ELITE III

DEVELOPER: REBELLION

ETA: Q2 2014

ΔOXO Rebellion's World War II sniper sim has consistently whistled just past greatness, so here's hoping that the extra clout of a more powerful console is just what it needs to finally nail that perfect shot. Just think about the physics potential and the graphic slow-motion murders. Alright, stop thinking now. You're scaring us.

HYPE TRAIN



CARMAGEDDON: REINCARNATION

DEVELOPER: STAINLESS GAMES ETA: Q1: 2014

ΔOXO Following a successful stint on Kickstarter, *Carmageddon*'s reboot somehow managed to secure an additional \$3.5 million of funding and now is headed for PS4. The gory, OTT racer still isn't going to hit triple-A production values with that kind of budget, but it's good to have it back all the same. Sort of. We think.

HYPE TRAIN



“ I can't speak freely about PS4, but now that some specs have been made public, I can say that Sony made wise engineering choices ”

@ID AA Carmack
(John Carmack, id)

“It's not a question of having more polygons or big explosions, no, no, no. You are going to be Garrett in the city, and when you are going to see the hands peeking, it will be your hands, you know?”

Stephane Roy, Eidos Montreal

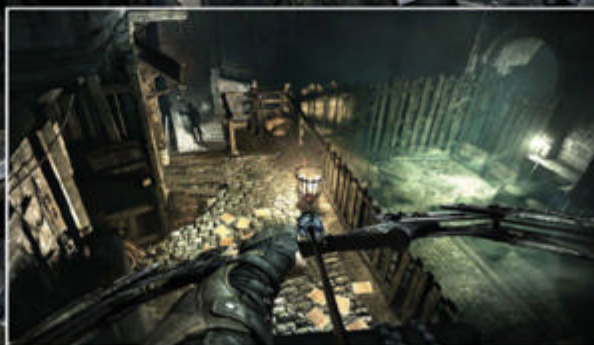
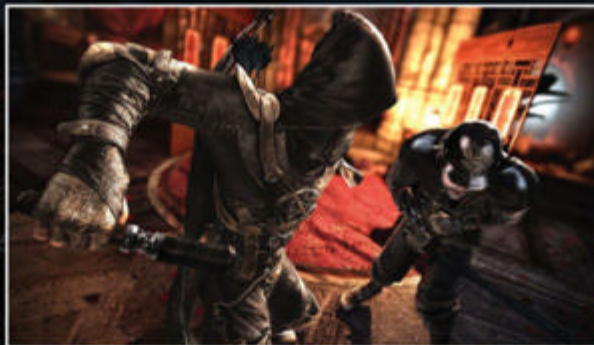


THIEF

DEVELOPER: EIDOS MONTREAL
ETA: Q1 2014

ΔOXO Shadows are one of the few telltale signs that can blow the cover of even the best-looking games, so next-gen lighting – especially when it has such a clear effect on gameplay as it does here – is going to be a vast improvement over what many of us are used to.

HYPE TRAIN



» BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL 2

More vapourware, although rumours have long suggested that this was bumped to next-gen consoles some time ago.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» THE LAST GUARDIAN

Did we dream this? Did it ever exist at all? And if it did, could it maybe have vanished to evolve into a PS4 game? We'll find out in time. Probably quite a lot of time.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» BORDERLANDS 3

It's one of Take Two's most lucrative properties, although we don't expect an announcement until the current run of DLC has finished.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» WHITE KNIGHT CHRONICLES III

We want a new *Dark Cloud* or *Ni No Kuni*, but Level-5's focus on online multiplayer makes us think its next title will be a third dodgy *Monster Hunter* clone. Sigh.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» GRAN TURISMO 6

Confirmed for PlayStation 3, though Sony would be crazy to let the moment pass without something *Gran Turismo* on PlayStation 4...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» RESIDENT EVIL 7

Capcom is already looking for feedback on what players want from the next *Resi* game. If you answered 'Zombies', pat yourself on the back.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» HEAVENLY SWORD 2

Ninja Theory did a sterling job with *DmC*, but will Sony come a-calling to get the team to bring Nariko back? Well, she was in *PlayStation All-Stars*...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



» GOD OF WAR IV

Obviously. After seeing how insanely good *Ascension* looked, we can't wait to see what the Santa Monica team does with the new machine.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



THE WITCHER III: WILD HUNT

DEVELOPER: CD PROJEKT RED

ETA: Q2 2014

ΔOXD Already being hailed as 'the next *Skyrim*', this epic RPG runs on a brand new engine designed specifically for open world games. The end result? A world bigger than Bethesda's opus and even more rich and detailed. If the team can nail the controls this time – the second game's PC origins were more than a little obvious – then it'll be incredible.

HYPE TRAIN

■■■■■



“The Witcher III will be available on all high end platforms at the same moment. As with *The Witcher II*, we won't port the game, we will adapt it. That means that each build will be prepared to use platform-specific features”

Pawel Sasko, CD Projekt Red

“Great physics technology is essential for delivering a better gaming experience and multiplatform support is critical for developers. With PhysX and APEX support for PlayStation 4, customers can look forward to better games”

Mike Skolones, NVIDIA



THE EVIL WITHIN

DEVELOPER: TANGO GAMEWORKS

ETA: Q2 2014

ΔOXD *Resident Evil* creator Shinji Mikami returns with what could be his directorial swansong, a brand new horror game for Bethesda. If you're among the majority that thinks *Resident Evil* has lost its way, this could be right up your street, although a grim live-action trailer is pretty much all we have to go on...

HYPE TRAIN

■■■



THE WITNESS

DEVELOPER: JONATHAN BLOW ETA: LAUNCH

ΔOXD The indie brainbox behind *Braid* is finally back on the scene, this time with more of a freeform puzzle adventure that isn't a million miles away from the likes of *Myst*. A striking visual style means it looks lovely even if it won't really be pushing the hardware. Still, it's great to see Sony getting behind the indie uprising.

HYPE TRAIN

■■■■■



INFAMOUS: SECOND SON

DEVELOPER: SUCKER PUNCH ETA: LAUNCH

ΔOXD With evil twin *Prototype* out of the way and next-gen hardware behind it, *Infamous* could at last live up to its full potential. PS4 is going to be awesome at doing huge open worlds and this will probably be the first game to really show that off – we just hope that the super-powered gameplay proves to be similarly massive.

HYPE TRAIN



“PS4, in our eyes, should be ‘the creative console’. It’s the place you go to be inspired; it’s the place to experience others’ dreams, or make your own: it’s the place you go, to make.”

Alex Evans, Media Molecule



PRIMAL CARNAGE: GENESIS

DEVELOPER: RATLOOP
ETA: LAUNCH

ΔOXD There’s been a distinct shortage of dinosaurs this generation, so we’re glad that indie team Lukewarm has come right out of the gates with this oddity. It’s a competitive multiplayer game in the *Left 4 Dead* template, teams of heavily armed humans taking on various classes (read: species) of dinosaur. Should be a laugh.

HYPE TRAIN



HUMAN ELEMENT

DEVELOPER: ROBOTOKI ETA: 2015

ΔOXD It’s been a while since Robert ‘Four-Zero-Two’ Bowling hopped of the *Call Of Duty* train but his new project finally has a name, and a new home in PlayStation 4. A survival game focused – as the title suggests – on human psychology as opposed to the ongoing zombie apocalypse. Intriguing, but ages off still, it would seem.

HYPE TRAIN



» APB VENDETTA

The failed PC MMO is, at the time of writing, a long way short of its Kickstarter goal. It might still make it to PS4, if it can hit its funding target somehow.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 15

Make the most of that next-gen hardware by cramming the game with even more microtransactions. Sigh.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» LITTLEBIGPLANET 3

It won’t be long before Sackboy appears on PS4. That Share button might as well have been created with *LBP* in mind...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» UNANNOUNCED YAGER FPS

The *Spec Ops* team is already hard at work on a first-person shooter that uses Unreal Engine 4. We’re quietly optimistic.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» AGENT

Rockstar is unlikely to say a thing about any new games until after that *GTA* thing ships, least of all this back-burner. If it even still exists.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» FALLOUT 4

It will happen – it’s just a matter of when. An E3 announcement could be a thing...

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» NI-OH

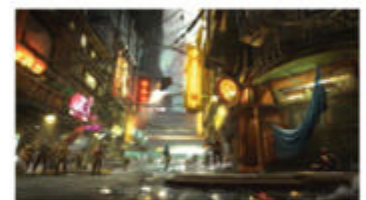
Team Ninja doesn’t only make games bursting with boobs, you know. This historical opus has been in limbo for years.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD

» STAR WARS 1313

LucasArts might have been closed but there’s still a chance this could be saved by licensing it to an external team.

PS4 LIKELIHOOD



54

CONFIRMED & LIKELY
PLAYSTATION 4 GAMES

The Tech

What do all those letters and numbers actually mean?

CPU

ΔOXO The central processing unit is the heart of the system and while it might surprise you to learn that the Jaguar processor line was originally designed for powerful laptops and portable devices rather than home gaming, that's not nearly so big a deal as the PC crowd are making out. With a fixed eight cores in every machine, developers will be better able to optimise for PS4 than PC, plus the x86 architecture is much closer to traditional PC tech – this should mean that developers will already be somewhat familiar with the hardware and that early titles will be able to take far better advantage of the full power of PS4 than, say, when they had to learn how to make the PS3 sing over the course of several full games. Sony has also suggested that there'll be a secondary low-power processor for handling background tasks, freeing up even more power to allow for the best-looking games you've ever seen.

GPU

ΔOXO As the PC Defence Force has been quick to point out, the graphics processing unit isn't exactly top-of-the-range compared to ultra-expensive elite PC parts. Still, an equivalent PC graphics card is capable of running most hardware-intensive titles smoothly at 1080p (presumably the PS4's native resolution), so factor in better optimisation on consoles and it's clear that games will look the business and slowdown should be a thing of the past. There'll be no support for 4k resolution for games – which might matter if anybody actually had a 4k television, but we're still years away from that being the standard – but media playback at this crazy resolution will be possible all the same.

MEMORY

ΔOXO 8GB of RAM is more than enough (especially considering that PS3 has a paltry 512MB) but when you consider that it's GDDR5 RAM – pretty much the fastest, most expensive memory solution out there – it's even more impressive. What's more, it's unified memory. What does that mean? Well, with PCs and many other consoles, it's possible for a process to use up all available graphics memory while a surplus of system memory sits idly by (or vice versa). With unified memory, every last drop of processing power can be used however it is needed. It's far more versatile and hopefully, that'll lead to bigger, better games.

COMMUNICATION

ΔOXO Faster USB and better wireless support, basically. Pretty simple and (outside of network stability) unlikely to have a significant impact on your gaming life. Well, unless your favourite game is *Copy Huge Files To And From USB Memory Sticks*, in which case you can expect to start setting some much better times to beat. You weirdo.

The Specs

- Δ MAIN PROCESSOR**
Single-chip custom processor
CPU: x86-64 AMD "Jaguar", 8 cores
GPU: 1.84 TFLOPS, AMD next-generation Radeon-based graphics engine
- ✕ MEMORY**
GDDR5 8GB
- HARD DISK DRIVE**
Built-in
- OPTICAL DRIVE (READ ONLY)**
BD 6xCAV
DVD 8xCAV
I/O
Super-Speed USB (USB 3.0), AUX
- Δ COMMUNICATION**
Ethernet (10BASE-T, 100BASE-TX, 1000BASE-T)
IEEE 802.11 b/g/n
Bluetooth® 2.1 (EDR)
- ✕ AV OUTPUT**
HDMI
Analog AV out
Digital Output (optical)

The Missing Pieces

Δ RELEASE DATE
We've known for some time that the originally announced 'Holiday 2013' launch date wouldn't be a global affair, but it's looking increasingly likely that Europe won't be seeing PlayStation 4 until early next year. No surprises there, though – there's not been a single piece of PlayStation hardware that the rest of the world hasn't had before us. Sob.

○ STORAGE
As we said before, expect to see several different models with varying hard drive sizes. With large storage solutions now extremely affordable, though, it shouldn't impact too heavily on pricing and each should put the original 20GB PS3 to shame.

“If you looked at who covered [the announcement] in terms of media, specialist and broad, the answer is everybody was interested. Everybody was commenting on it. There's a bit of frustration that not every last detail was on the table but let's not forget, we're not launching it next week”

Fergal Gara, Sony

HARD DRIVE

ΔOXO Sony has yet to confirm exactly what kind of storage PS4 will have. Given the expense of GDDR5 memory, though, we'd assume that it won't be using quicker, more expensive solid state drives, instead opting for larger traditional models. At GDC, it was revealed that every machine will have a hard drive (as expected) and that they would be 'very large'. While we expect to see several different models including a cheaper one with a smaller storage capacity, Sony's focus on streaming and digital means we also fully expect to be dealing in terabytes rather than gigabytes for the inevitable higher spec model.

DISC DRIVE

ΔOXO The key improvement here over PlayStation 3 is that disc read speed has trebled from 2x speed to 6x. While this doesn't necessarily mean the end of mandatory installs, it'll certainly mean that developers don't need to rely on them – at this speed, data should be able to be streamed directly from the disc quickly enough for open worlds to be rendered seamlessly. Thief developer Stephane Roy has even suggested that loading mid-game could perhaps be eradicated completely, which is amazing news if true.

CONTROLLER

ΔOXO The main change to the established DualShock template is that touchpad, which also clicks in (like the analog sticks) and, according to several sources, can also act as some kind of primitive display. The light bar allows for Move-style functionality, while an in-built mono speaker will allow developers to bombard you with additional sound as you play. We also mourn the loss of the Start and Select buttons, though both are basically redundant anyway – Select barely ever selects anything and Start is primarily used for *stopping* games. The two are combined into a new Options button, which sits opposite that major selling point, the Share button. We can't wait to start sharing pictures and replays with the world.

PLAYSTATION 4 EYE

ΔOXO While oddities like *Wonderbook* and *EyePet* are already using cameras to create augmented reality experiences, the low resolution of the existing Eye (a pitiful 640x480) means that the image quality is usually not good enough to carry the experience. This new camera will change that, capable of capturing players at display resolution for far more convincing illusions, plus it will be able to do everything Kinect is capable of and more, from body tracking to voice commands. Oh, and the resolution is significantly higher than that of Kinect too, so it'll be far more accurate.



KEY NEW FEATURES

X PLAY AS YOU DOWNLOAD

Improved streaming tech and packaging will reportedly allow many games to be played long before they finish downloading – once the basic files are done, you'll be able to jump right in while the game downloads in the background as you play it. Ingenious.

O PLAY ANYWHERE

Got a PS Vita? Good. If not, you should, as PS4 is going to turn the handheld into a must-have companion. You'll be able to stream PS4 games to the device, meaning you can play your home game collection wherever you go. We're also promised greater connectivity between the two consoles, which sounds awesome.

□ UNITY SUPPORT

It'll be easier than ever for small developers to get their games onto PlayStation thanks to a one-two punch of improvements. Firstly, it has been announced that PS4 and Vita will join PS3 in supporting the Unity platform (something popular among indie developers due to its ease of use and versatility) and secondly, Sony has relaxed its concept approval process to potentially open the door to thousands of new games, even going so far as to waive update and licence fees in the case of fledgling studios. Great news.

Δ THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT

Microsoft has SmartGlass, Nintendo has its own bespoke Fisher Price iPad and now Sony is joining the party as well. The PlayStation App (which will presumably replace the existing rubbish one) will allow you to buy and download games to your console from anywhere, as well as offering all of the social elements of the console itself. In theory, it could even be used to stream and play games on any device, though that's something that's likely to come a little further down the line. If at all, given how much Sony is getting behind Vita as a device for just that purpose.

□ PRICE

After taking the piss somewhat with PS3's original \$599 price tag, Sony will have to be extremely careful when deciding on an RRP for its new machine. And that won't be easy, because some of the components (especially the GDDR5 memory) don't come cheap. Still, we'd expect it to hit at somewhere around £350, although some sources are suggesting it could be cheaper still. Which would be nice.

X DESIGN

All these numbers and stats are nice and everything, but what does the machine actually look like? The truth is, it really doesn't matter – with tablets, handhelds and such, form *is* function. But when the most interaction you're likely to have with the console once it's set up is simply swapping discs now and again, shape and size is sort of irrelevant. Well, within reason...

Install

Where fact + opinion ÷ PlayStation = the truth

BAT TO BASICS

Batman: Arkham Origins is swooping down on us like... well, a bat

THE BATMAN: ARKHAM games have been big successes for Warner Bros and developer Rocksteady, and as we all know, money talks. *Batman: Arkham Origins* is hitting the shelves 25 October, and it's a prequel showcasing a young, inexperienced Dark Knight as he faces off against several supervillains for the first time. It sounds pretty awesome, but there is a caveat – Rocksteady is not the developer. The reins are instead being taken by WB Games Montreal, an unproven studio whose biggest output to date was the Wii U port of *Arkham City*.

Cause for concern? Perhaps, perhaps not. WB Montreal will be using Rocksteady's customised Unreal engine to create the game, so expect it to look and feel similar. *Arkham Origins* will take place in a fully open-world Gotham, which promises to be much more alive and functional than *Arkham City*. It's also

been claimed that it's going to be around twice as big. To make getting around a doddle, the Batwing jet will offer fast travel for those tired of traversal.

It takes place on Christmas Eve, as notorious crime boss Black Mask brings together eight assassins to hunt down and dispose of the Batman. We'll see the debuts of Deathstroke and Alberto Falcone, as well as the return of the Penguin and everyone's favourite butler, Alfred Pennyworth.

Combat will apparently be similar but we're sure there will be lots of new gadgets to play with, including the 'Remote Claw', which allows Batman to shoot two targets before pulling them towards one another. You can create dangling explosive traps, string foes up or just smash two dudes' heads together – sounds like fun!

One of the most interesting snippets of information surrounding *Arkham*

Origins is the rumour that it will include a multiplayer mode for the first time in the series. Sources have told of a team-based mode where players, acting as gang members affiliated to either The Joker or Bane, try to take down Batman and Robin. We don't know the specifics, but it's an intriguing premise and we can't wait to find out more.

But what of Rocksteady? Rumours have been around for a while that the studio is focusing on a prequel of its own, based on the Silver Age of comics and not only starring Batman but several members of the Justice League. This sounds like it could be the best thing ever, but we wonder how likely it is considering *Arkham Origins* is also a prequel. There's one thing we do know – a Rocksteady game that lets us play as The Flash will win every game of the year award, every year, forever.

Need To Know



Next Xbox is coming

By the time you read this, Microsoft will have announced the new Xbox! As we write, though, it hasn't happened, so we don't know what to expect. Let's guess! Will it have arms? Will it open doors to parallel dimensions? Will Microsoft be super ballsy and call it the PlayStation 5? All these questions and more have probably already been answered.

“Origins will take place in a fully open-world Gotham, which promises to be much more alive and functional than *Arkham City*”

FIVE OTHER SUPERHEROES THAT DESERVE GOOD GAMES

The *Arkham* series has proven that good Batman games can exist. We'd love to see some great titles starring these characters too...



SUPERMAN

Superman gets a lot of stick from some fans, claiming his extremely high level of power makes him a boring character who is never in jeopardy. We couldn't disagree more, and the wealth of great Superman comics over the years can attest to that. He's never had a good game though – in fact, he's had one of the worst of all time in the infamous *Superman 64*. A great Superman game with a variety of locations across the galaxy, fighting huge foes like Doomsday, Darkseid and Zod: just imagine it! Yes please.

HAWKEYE

The coolest member of the Avengers deserves his own title, especially considering his renewed popularity with the hit film and his great new ongoing comic. Bows are enjoying a resurgence in games lately, with *Tomb Raider*, *Far Cry 3*, *Crysis 3* and more all featuring the weapon. The time is right to combine the two and make an awesome game full of swashbuckling adventure, witty quips and lots of archery.



THE FLASH

Can you imagine how fun a great Flash game would be? There's a surprising level of gameplay scope when it comes to running *really really fast*. If a developer could nail the thrill of being one of the DC Universe's famous speedsters, the potential would be limitless. Plus, we just really love The Flash. He runs fast. It's cool.



DAREDEVIL

This one might be difficult, as re-creating Daredevil's enhanced sense and 'radar-vision' in a videogame could pose some problems. Regardless of how it's done, Matt Murdock definitely deserves his own digital starring role. A favourite among proper comic fans for decades, DD exemplifies all that is great with Marvel's street-level heroes.

ALL THE MUCK THAT'S FIT TO RAKE



Woou, a spooky ghost

Tesco leaked info of a game called *Call Of Duty: Ghosts* on its website, with a box shot and everything. It looks to be developed by Infinity Ward and still set in modern times, which everyone predicted. Ghost was a character in *MW2*, and although he met a sticky demise, it seems he might have something to do with this.



EX-COM

The frequently delayed *XCOM* shooter has "evolved", according to 2K Games. The game has been re-branded as *The Bureau*, a squad-based tactical shooter that will still be set within the world of *XCOM*. It's understandable, as maybe 2K doesn't want people to confuse the game with last year's awesome *XCOM: Enemy Unknown*.



Ninty-no-mates

E3 has famously had three big press conferences (one for each console publisher) but this year, Nintendo is bowing out, preferring to do its own thing before the show starts. That means all eyes will be on the competition between Sony and Microsoft – we can expect huge reveals to try to win public favour.



ANT MAN / GIANT MAN

Hank Pym has been known as both Ant Man and Giant Man, his discovery of the incredible Pym Particles allowing him to change his size at will. A game with such environmental scope and detail that you could shrink to microscopic levels or grow as tall as a mountain is way beyond what current technology can achieve, but the idea is amazing. We might patent that one ourselves...



METAL GEAR SOLID V

The Phantom Pain is finally a real thing. Sam Smith is more than a bit excited...



We all suspected as much, but one grand reveal later and we know for sure that Metal Gear Solid: Ground Zeroes and

the mysterious The Phantom Pain are in fact the same game – *Metal Gear Solid V*. Only Hideo Kojima could come up with a game reveal that's so bizarrely protracted, incredibly secretive yet blindingly obvious at the same time. I have got a lot of respect for the guy, even if he is clearly a nutcase.

Metal Gear Solid has been a big part of my life for a long time, a sentiment I'm sure is shared by many of my age. Since playing the original on my PSone I've eagerly awaited each new instalment, enjoying every moment of tense stealth action and each ridiculous plot twist. Solid Snake and Big Boss have become legendary characters among gamers, along with a fantastic supporting cast including classics such as Otacon, Revolver Ocelot and, everyone's favourite, Johnny 'Dirty Pants' Sasaki.

So needless to say, I'm waiting with bated breath for *Metal Gear Solid V: The Phantom Pain*. It's another Big Boss title, set some time after *Peace Walker*, with the narrative happening in two parts. 'Ground Zeroes' is the prologue, detailing how everyone's favourite one-eyed super-soldier falls into a coma, with 'The Phantom Pain' coming years later upon his awakening. I see what you did there, Kojima. Sneaky devil.

We don't know much so far, but Big Boss's escape from a hospital infested with demonic visions of foes past seems like the crazy stuff we've come to expect from the series. Kojima has said *Metal Gear Solid V* will be more free-roaming than past games and feature an improved base-building element – two things I'm very happy to hear.

What's been most exciting so far is all the little nods to fans in the footage we've seen. It's easy to spot Master Miller at the beginning of the recent gameplay demo, and the doctor caring for Big Boss looks a lot like Kio Marv from *Metal Gear 2*. A figure strolling through the flames is reminiscent of Colonel Volgin from *MGS3*, and could a child in a gas mask be a young Psycho Mantis? Most intriguing of all, Snake is rescued toward the end by a man with long hair and cowboy boots, riding a horse. Ocelot? I bloody hope so.

The only downside to me is that, no matter how cool Big Boss is, I'll always be more a fan of Solid Snake, but with his rapid ageing during *MGS4*, another game starring him seems unlikely. What I'd love to see would be modern remakes of the first two *Metal Gear* games, titles that few people today have played despite their plots remaining integral to the overall series. You listening, Hideo?

“Only Hideo Kojima could come up with a game reveal so bizarrely protracted”





YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE PS4 REVEAL SO FAR?

**facebook**
facebook.com/PlayMagUK

Dear Sony, cut the crap and tell us how much and when. I want want want.
JONATHAN JORDON

Impressive as it is...the total lack of backwards compatibility means that they can keep it.
JOHN MURRAY

I'm really excited, I love the changes they've made with the controller, I just can't wait to get my hands on one to try out the changes.
KRISTOPHER WILLIAMS

I love the look of the console, 100% transparent was a genius move!
IAN DICKSON

I can't help wishing that it will transform my living room into a holo-deck...
JAMIE GARDINER

The social networking side could change the way we play for a new generation in gaming. The future is looking bright.
TONY WATSON

I think it's going to revolutionize console gaming, and with E3 coming up it's only going to get better
JOE LENNON

PS4 will be awesome. But it needs to have at least 1TB of hard drive.
MICHAEL MCGETTRICK

**YouTube**
youtube.com/PlayMagUK

Wait, the PS3 is already out?
HORATIO RAZZMATAZZ

I don't really like playing games online, going outside, socialising or interacting with other human beings at all, so I'm not too interested in the Share button and all that. *Knack* looks amazing though!
CLASSICPARTRIDGE

I would have liked to see the actual console, but ultimately I've been pleasantly surprised with how much I've liked the PS4 so far. Great hardware, lots of games, a clear focus on the core audience and a variety of innovative social features. I haven't

been this excited for a new console in quite some time, and I can't wait to see what comes next, both from Sony and Microsoft. The future of videogames looks to be in good hands!
BUTTBURGER69

Where's the goddamn backwards compatibility? All these new games can do one, I want to play all the games I already have on my shiny new console! Sort it out Sony, or I'm gonna become an X-Bot.
ALAN

PS4MANIA IS RUNNING WILD!
TERRYBOLLEA

**twitter**
twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

Excited? Excited can't cover it, I haven't been so on edge for a console launch in many many years.
@CJOM

As much as they're pushing the social networking side of the PS4, I'm surprised PSHome has not been announced for the PS4. #tear
@HOMEBOY79

I've pre ordered already just waiting for the price super excited!!!!
@GOONERNOTTLE

Excited, just need to know how there gonna use ps+ on it, oh and *Knack*? Wtf haha
@LLCOOLCHAY

I am super pumped and I am patiently waiting to hear about the price. I will get it no matter what but that will say when.
@RISEUP44

Sony has done everything right so far – signed on indie devs, powerful hardware, and giving players what they want.
@ANTHONYCRO

Blizzard needs to get outta there with that shit.
@WHOISROBBIE

EURMAGAWD GRAPHICS
@BLUEFLYINGCAR

Hang on, where's Ken Kutaragi?
@CRUNCH_KING

Play Online

Want to share your thoughts? Shout into our digital ears at facebook.com/PlayMagazineUK, youtube.com/PlayMagUK and [@PlayMag_UK](https://twitter.com/PlayMag_UK), where we hang out when we're not doing work (i.e. all the bloody time).

ANATOMY OF... WATCH DOGS' AIDEN PEARCE

The PlayStation 4 is coming and one of our most anticipated games for it is the phenomenal looking *Watch Dogs* from Ubisoft. Players will control antihero Aiden Pearce, but what's the story behind the bandana-wearing badass?

I KNOW KUNG-FU

It's not just his phone that makes Pearce mighty useful in the struggle against CtOS. The guy is athletic and skilled in parkour-style urban traversal, as well as a crack shot with a gun to boot. Not unlike *Assassin's Creed*, *Watch Dogs* presents a huge city for you to play around in, and what fun would that be if getting around was a pain? When the shit hits the fan, cover-based shooting sections similar to other big games can occur, although the hacking ability lends itself to an emergent style of gameplay and an ever-changing battlefield.

HACKTIVIST

Aiden is a skilled hacker and can use his modified phone to break into almost any electrical device around the city. Hack into ATMs to retrieve account data and steal some cash, trigger malfunctions in traffic lights to cause a pile-up, even take control of a train so you can hop on top and ride it to safety. Pearce can also scan civilians to find out information on their demographic, health and behavioural habits. It's awesome to see in-game, and by using CtOS' own systems against itself, Pearce has a fighting chance.

BIG BROTHER SAYS HI

Watch Dogs takes place in a near future where increasing use of technology has seen humanity become ever more interconnected, at the arguable loss of their freedom. The game is set in Chicago, one of several cities to feature a supercomputer known as the Central Operating System, or "CtOS." The system controls almost every piece of technology in the city, and contains info on every resident and their activities. Rather Orwellian, eh? Pearce rebels against this dystopian overwatch for reasons we don't yet know.

MUST LOVE DOGS

Oh yeah, and the best thing of all about our pal Aiden – when the bandana is down, he's a dead ringer for John Cusack. This makes us far happier than it probably should, but come on, you get to play as John Cusack! Sort of. John Cusack is awesome and therefore Aiden Pearce is also awesome because he looks like him. It's infallible logic. Between the cap, the cool coat, and *looking like John Cusack*, it's safe to say we are fans of Mr. Pearce.



RIDING MY COATTAILS

Aiden sports a snazzy coat that accentuates his outlaw style. We at Play love to act hip and dress fly, so we know a cool coat when we see one. Here are a few more...



NEO

It's bloody Neo! The guy who made a bunch of people in the early Noughties think that wearing massive leather trenchcoats actually made them look cool rather than massive gothy douches. Still, he managed to make it work for him. Kind of.



THANE

The famed assassin from *Mass Effect 2* also sports a long leather trenchcoat, but because this is a far-future sci-fi setting full of aliens and huge spaceships, it looks a bit less silly. With his gravelly voice and his deep, soulful (alien) eyes, Thane has built up a legion of admirers among the fans.



ADAM JENSEN

He may never have asked for this, but Adam Jensen knows how to look good when dealing with his many troubles. Rocking a snazzy long coat like he just don't give a damn, Adam does a good job of following the style set by his *Deus Ex* predecessor, JC Denton.



ALBERT WESKER

He's evil, he's got crazy superpowers, he wants to destroy the world just because, and he does it all while sporting shades and a leather trenchcoat. The ghost of Neo strikes again! Remember everyone, this is a look that works far better in fiction than real life. *You* will look like a tool.

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Re:Play

You are the controller! But only on these pages

You write letters to us and then we read them and sometimes respond! This month it's Trophies, 4G, hypocrisy and random Twitter burble. Sounds like our kinda party...

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WE NEED MORE GEES!

Hello **Play!** I've been wondering for a while... will the current PS Vita be compatible with the upcoming 4G network? I've heard rumours a 4G-enabled PS Vita is on its way to replace the current Vita models – is this true? I'm tempted to purchase a PS Vita, especially since the games can now be found a lot cheaper to buy, but all these 4G rumours are putting me off buying a current one. Finally, I would like to hear more details of the cross-connectivity features of a Vita with the upcoming PS4, if at all possible.

Adrian Fisher



● Since Wi-Fi is everywhere, it's easy to get online.

It seems logical that a 4G-enabled Vita would be the next step for the console, but considering its lukewarm reception so far, we do have to wonder if perhaps plans have changed. 4G isn't that special anyway, so if you feel like buying a Vita, we say go ahead and jump in. PS4-wise, expect to be able to stream next-gen games to Vita remotely and see much more in the way of interesting and inventive connectivity...

WHY CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

Hi **Play**,

I understand you guys are a Sony magazine, but do you agree with me that being a fanboy for only one console or company is stupid? Why would you limit what you can play for the sake of some weird clan mentality? I've got every console and I have a great time on all of them. It just gets on my nerves when people slag off other machines for no reason besides silly bias. Thoughts?

Leanne Whitlock



We couldn't agree more. Sure, we cover Sony stuff here on **Play**, but we still play other consoles all the time. Even the Wii U occasionally! Disliking other consoles for no real reason is a dumb move that ultimately only hurts your own enjoyment options. Let's all just chill out and have a big hug.

THE BIG ISSUE

CROSSING THE LINE?

Interesting article in issue 229, guys, about PS3 games that undersold; games you think deserve a larger crowd. Interesting, but bloody annoying for one reason: *Spec Ops: The Line*! Don't get me wrong, I completely agree it did undersell – it was narrative genius which told a truly harrowing tale of the horrors of war! With pretty damn fine gameplay and one of the best stories ever told in a shooter, especially a military one. So why did it undersell? Could it be “professional” reviews that summarise the game as (and I quote) “It's still not very good at all, and not particularly worth your time” Who could have wrote this, **Play** mag? Back in issue 220? Now I'm used to disagreeing with your reviews, but put the same

game in “Why didn't it sell?” is really taking the Michael. Not to mention the fact you also in the same issue, no less, put *Spec Ops* in a list of your favourite games that were influenced by *BioShock*... your favourite games! Hypocrisy at its finest!

Gaz Taylor

You raise a good point, Gaz, but magazines occasionally contradicting themselves is unavoidable. **Play** is written by more than one person, and staff will change over time. The person writing this (right now!) is not the same person who wrote the *Spec Ops* review. We try to avoid going back on ourselves when possible, but sometimes it has to be done.



Things you may have missed on NowGamer.com's YouTube page

YouTube
www.youtube.com/
NowGamerTube



FAR CRY 3: BLOOD DRAGON
RYAN AND SAM ACTUALLY AGREE!



INJUSTICE: GODS AMONG US
WATCH EVERY SUPER MOVE



DEAD ISLAND: RIPTIDE
PUTTING THE BOOT IN



WRITE IN AND WIN! If you're chosen as Star Letter, you win a game. This month, the prize is **Dead Island: Riptide!** Do you enjoy killing zombies? A lot? Then this is the game for you!



PLAY

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Jan-Dec 2012

STAR LETTER



Should you be able to get all Platins solo?

HELL IS OTHER PEOPLE

Dear **Play**,

Pleasantries first, great mag and thanks for the 1/2 price sub offer which I have gladly taken advantage of!

Anyway, first up – Trophies. When Trophies were first introduced I wasn't taken by them and didn't see the point in playing a game in a specific way just to get Trophies, but after getting my first Platinum, things changed. Wow, I never imagined a little symbol appearing on my screen could mean so much. Since that moment I have become obsessed with Platins.

So to the point, and I know it's an old one but why oh why are more and more games having stupid online/co-op-related trophies? Nobody wants them. A Platinum Trophy should be a personal achievement and as such should be obtainable in single-player only. Okay, I understand some people (a minority, I bet) will enjoy going for co-op trophies, so a simple solution: have two Trophy sets, one for single-player only and one including co-op that you have to choose at the beginning of a game.

David Beecroft

The idea of two separate sets of Trophies for single-player and online is a good one, but we don't see the current system changing that much. It is irritating having some Trophies depend on the actions of others, but online play is arguably the most important part of the industry today. As such, it makes sense that many games would reward players for doing well in these multiplayer arenas. Remember, at the end of the day, Trophies and Achievements mean nothing. Enjoy games as you like, but don't lose any sleep over it, eh?

twitter

www.twitter.com/PlayMag_UK

You ask us things on Twitter, we sigh and come up with a sarcastic response.

@BLUESCORPION91 do you think that the lack of decent games suitable for kids will hurt gaming next-gen?

Nope. There's just as many games for kids as there ever was. *Skylanders*, anyone?

@ANDYPALMERSEO what game would you like to star in? I was gonna ask would you wear womens underwear for a bet but thought it too odd! For a bet? We do it for fun! It's all silky on our dirty nethers. Sorry, what was the question?

@TMCKINNIN is japanese games better than games produced in western world and think there should be more japanese games localised over here
Some Western games are good, some Japanese games are good. But yes, we would love for more foreign games to be localised.

@SUPERSONICSJM Which game would you say has been the best game on PS3 to date? *Dark Souls*. Best game of the generation, hands down.

@FIANDRAWR do u evn lift
We used to, but we tore our right rotator cuff doing shoulder presses, which kind of put us off. We were buff, once.

@CLEVECHRIS Should I go suede or leather?
Suede. Always suede.



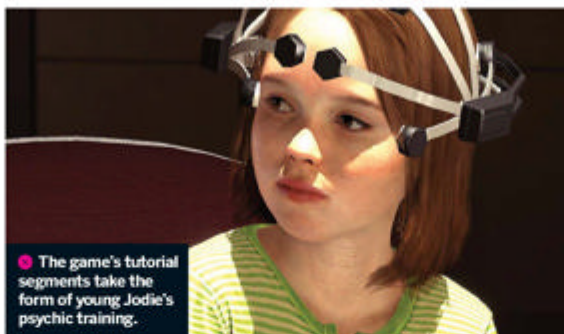
WOWCAST #1
WORLD OF WARCRAFT CHATTER



DEADLY PREMONITION
THE DIRECTOR'S CUT ANALYSED

PREVIEWS

The games that will shape the future of PlayStation



● The game's tutorial segments take the form of young Jodie's psychic training.



● Beyond covers 15 years of Jodie's life – from disturbed toddler to sullen young adult.

A GLASS CAGE OF EMOTION

More polygons = a better game, right?

AS THE POSTER boy developer for games as pieces of mature storytelling, David Cage is hugely proud of the technology that's gone into making *Beyond's* characters visibly emotive. Besides gluing metal balls to his actors' faces (presumably to track their expressions and not as some sinister punishment), the in-game character models have also doubled in detail – from *Heavy Rain's* 15,000 polygons per character to *Beyond's* 30,000. "In a medium like ours, technology is very important. It is what we rely on to get the player emotionally involved," says Cage. "We try to make players forget that this is just a programme animating pixels on a screen."



● Character models are as ludicrously detailed as ever.





RELEASE DATE: 17 SEPTEMBER

Beyond: Two Souls

David Cage breaks out gaming's tiniest violin



When we were younger, the future was all about cardboard spaceships and malfunctioning robots chasing us round the moon with disintegration rays. There were sentient computers and silver jumpsuits and cool Eighties hair. Not so, says David Cage. According to his speech at February's PS4 reveal conference, what kids today have to look forward to as they sprawl on the couch on lazy summer days is emotion. Old men with soulful eyes. Teenagers weeping in phoneboxes. Parents screaming at toddlers. "Getting the player emotionally involved is the Holy Grail of all videogame creators," he says. So, no more *Words With Friends* for you, sonny Jim – time to grow up and have a cry at *Beyond: Two Souls*.

The premise of *Beyond* is that troubled teen Jodie Holmes (Page) has been born with a psychic tie to a spectral being called Aiden, an intangible presence somewhere between vengeful spirit and guardian angel. A pastel-coloured Roald Dahl adaptation this is not – while Jodie's parents initially treat Aiden like the sort of invisible friend that likes its own bowl of Weetabix at breakfast time, it's not long before they're howling that Jodie's a monster and abandoning her to the care of government paranormal expert Nathan Dawkins (Willem Dafoe). Dawkins works for an agency that trains her up and helps her harness

her abilities, which inevitably leads to betrayal and Jodie on the run, fighting for her life against legions of sinister baddies intent on recapturing or killing her. Like we said, it's cheery stuff.

Gameplay is split between Jodie and Aiden the loutish ghost. The two characters are linked by a kind of spiritual tether, and while Jodie runs about in the physical world, players can switch to Aiden's point of view to solve puzzles, scout ahead or go all *Poltergeist* and start flinging the crockery around. For example, during a sequence in which Jodie must escape from a burning hospital, the player comes across an unresponsive lift. Unable to fix it from where she is, Jodie instead gets Aiden to float through the door, down the elevator shaft and into the lift compartment, in which the player sees that there's a crate preventing the door from closing. After a persuasive shove from Aiden, the doors close and the lift is ready to move again. It's a simple puzzle, but neatly sets up the dynamic of how Aiden and Jodie complement each other's abilities. As the story progresses, you can put Aiden to more destructive use: using his powers to push buildings over on top of enemies, or to possess them and have them murder their allies. In this relationship, Jodie is the brains, Aiden the muscle.

That said, Jodie herself is far from helpless. The agency's training covered

more than just how to point Aiden at things she wants dead; by the time Jodie goes on the run, she's a dab hand at fisticuffs herself. The hand-to-hand combat system looks very familiar to that of *Heavy Rain*, in that it's basically a string of QTEs which you can either pull off flawlessly or spectacularly fail. The question this does leave hanging is what happens if you come over all thumbs during one of these fight sequences. With four main characters, *Heavy Rain* could afford to bump off a few to punish ham-fistedness – the game had no qualms about tossing characters into car crushers or slashing their throats with buzz saws if you weren't paying enough attention. But as Jodie is the only playable character besides Aiden (at least, that we've seen so far), *Beyond* presumably can't be as final in its judgements, or it'll be an awfully short game.

Another shift that Quantic Dream seems to have made with *Beyond* is to ramp up the action sequences – or at least scale back the tedium. While *Heavy Rain*'s climactic moments were one-on-one brawl sequences, *Beyond* has collapsing clock towers, leaps from moving trains and explosive helicopter crashes. It doesn't feel like *Call Of Duty* crowbarring in action for action's sake – more like somebody has quietly mentioned to the developers that, while moments of quiet reflection can help develop a character, no-one's ever



● Jodie was heartbroken to see the 'No Stairway' sign. Denied!



● We can think of better places to stand. Lots of them, actually.



> come out of a *Bond* film complaining there weren't enough shots of Daniel Craig wandering aimlessly round a shopping centre, or trying (and failing) to cook a fried egg.

And while you might debate whether or not adding the likenesses of Hollywood actors is the next step in gaming's future, there is something oddly pleasing about recognising *Beyond*'s characters from their regular flesh-form movie work. It's not quite as good as David Cage wants us to believe – for all the hype around *Beyond*'s facial capturing technology, sometimes the characters just end up looking eerie; a cast of robots trying to emulate emotions, like something The Doctor would disable with a Sonic Screwdriver. But it's exciting to see the technology working, even if it needs more refinement. Like *Heavy Rain* and *LA Noire* before it, it's easy to think that in five or ten years time, *Beyond* could

be seen as an important milestone.

Which is why it's such a shame that *Beyond* plumps for such a gloomy, muted palette. Visually and thematically, it looks every bit the spiritual successor to *Heavy Rain*, which barring fifteen minutes of happy-clappy sunshine in its opening spends the rest of its runtime slapping the player in the face with catastrophe after catastrophe until they're an empty husk, numbly pressing buttons. Children get murdered, someone gets tortured with a drill, a bloke chops his own finger off and it rains the whole bloody time – if it were the six o'clock news, you'd have flicked over to *The Simpsons* by ten past. And that's the uneasy feeling we're getting from *Beyond: Two Souls*: that for all its teary piano music and shots of Ellen Page looking sullen, we don't yet care about these characters as much as David Cage thinks we should.

Which is not to say that *Beyond* isn't one of the more interesting games left of this generation – whether Cage's feverish devotion to 'interactive storytelling' is your bag or not, in a generation bloated with *COD* and *Uncharted* clones, it is at least doing its teary-eyed emoting outside of triple-A gaming's comfort zone.

But our worry is that in trying so hard to do mature, emotional storytelling, *Beyond* will fall into the sixth-form drama student trap of confusing 'mature' with 'maudlin'. Not everything has to be about violence, death, abandonment and psychosis. As it stands, *Beyond: Two Souls* is shaping up to be a polished and genuinely intriguing experience. But for god's sake, David, cheer up.

Beyond: Two Souls is being developed by Quantic Dream for PlayStation 3. You can read more about it on Quantic Dream's website: www.quanticroad.com/en



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

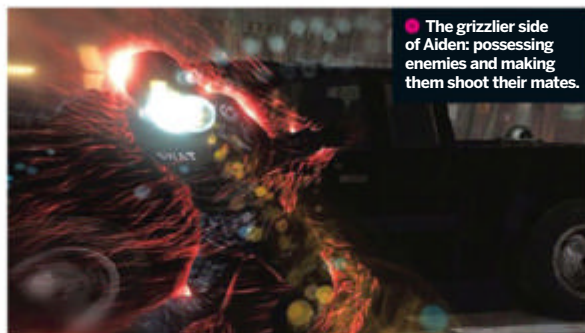
- Ellen Page and Willlem Dafoe – it's *Heavy Rain* with star power.
- The facial capturing tech is pretty much the best in the business.
- Branching story. How you treat Aiden determines how dark *Beyond* gets.
- Unlike the majority of triple-A games, Quantic Dream's 'interactive storytelling' feels fresh

READ ME

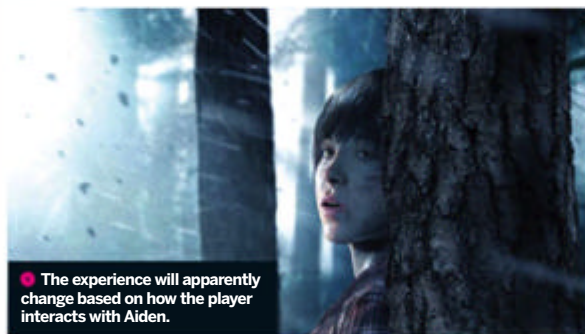
Beyond: Two Souls is the latest 'grown-up' adventure from serious-business auteur David Cage.



After her inevitable betrayal, Jodie and Aiden hide out from the agency by roughing it on the streets.



The grizzlier side of Aiden: possessing enemies and making them shoot their mates.



The experience will apparently change based on how the player interacts with Aiden.



Yeah, that hat just looks real. And real awesome too. We'd rock that noise, for realises.



Willem Dafoe plays psychic mentor Nathan Dawkins. Pictured here in a default state of concern.

INTERVIEW

On set with Quantic Dream's Guillaume de Fondaumière

Is there any additional pressure when you're working with an established star like Ellen Page?

Working with established stars such as Ellen Page or Willem Dafoe can indeed appear to be scary at times. To start with, David's script was going to be read and ultimately needed to be appealing to Ellen and Willem. Later on, everything required to be perfectly ready and organised for their on-stage performance – not least David, who was going to direct actors who have both worked with some of the best directors in the world. Last but not least, we absolutely wanted both actors to be satisfied with their in-game model and animations... We tried to not think too much about all this and simply give it our best take each time. Today, all we know is that Ellen and Willem are very happy with the result and that is already very rewarding.

Were there any general patterns of behaviour from players that you saw with *Heavy Rain*? Have you been able to react to them with *Beyond*?

One important finding was that some core gamers are apparently "allergic" to the visual prompts of QTEs and wanted more direct control action sequences. The latter was easy to address since *Beyond*'s second playable character Aiden is all about direct control actions. Concerning QTEs, we decided to use a different system for Jodie's action sequences and hope it will appeal more to certain core gamers.

David Cage's DICE speech criticised the lack of variation in the content and themes of videogames – do you think other developers are scared of broadening the range of subject matters explored by games?

David Cage and I believe that videogames can be a form of cultural expression just like books or films, and not only fun toys for teenagers or adults. As such, videogames can be meaningful and convey emotion and maybe even ideas or beliefs.

I don't know if developers are scared to venture into this direction, but I certainly do know how difficult it was to convince financiers to entrust us with the budget to create such unique gaming experiences. *Heavy Rain* was one of the first games carrying this type of subject matter that was both critically and commercially successful. This may encourage others, developers and publishers alike, to venture into untapped thematic territories in turn.

Do you think *Heavy Rain* has had an influence on interactive storytelling design in other titles? If so, where do you feel you've seen its influence?

A number of developers have proclaimed their interest for *Heavy Rain*'s narrative approach, from Cliff Bleszinsky to Jenova Chen. But I guess the influence of *Heavy Rain* has been most evident in Telltale's *The Walking Dead*.



Aiden's good for more than just pushing boxes. In a pinch, he's quite the arsonist.



RELEASE DATE: Q1 2014

Dark Souls II

Prepare to die... again



For a certain type of gamer, the *Souls* series is more than just a punishing pair of games where death lurks around every corner. It's confirmation that despite an industry-wide shift towards ease of access, clear signposting and handholding that's often more patronising than it is subtle, some developers are still willing to drop you at the deep end without so much as a tutorial level. This is how gaming used to be when hard-drives were something you upgraded on a PC, and while we'd never go back to an era before PlayStation Network, we do still like our games to be challenging... sometimes even a little bit sadistic.

So imagine our surprise when From Software used the word "accessible" to describe *Dark Souls II* during last year's reveal. This immediately set alarm bells ringing among hardcore gamers who were worried that the next game would be dumbed down for a wider audience. But having now seen a demonstration of the game in action, as well as speaking

to co-director Yui Tanimura, it's looking like a less intimidating version of the last game is the furthest thing from the developer's mind. If anything, it's the opposite; *Dark Souls II* wants to retain the challenge factor while finding new and interesting ways for your character to meet their demise.

We know virtually nothing about the game's story at this point in time but it's interesting to note that dragons have appeared in just about every sketch and video released so far. This suggests *Dark Souls II* could be a prequel rather than a straight-up sequel. The only true dragons we encountered in the last game were Kalameet from the *Artorias Of The Abyss* expansion and the mysterious Stone Dragon that you could enter a covenant with. All the other draconic creations were drakes, wyverns or dragons of the undead or corrupted variety. Whatever the case, we just hope that From Software leaves some of the story ambiguous so that the more ponderous among us can fill in the gaps for ourselves.

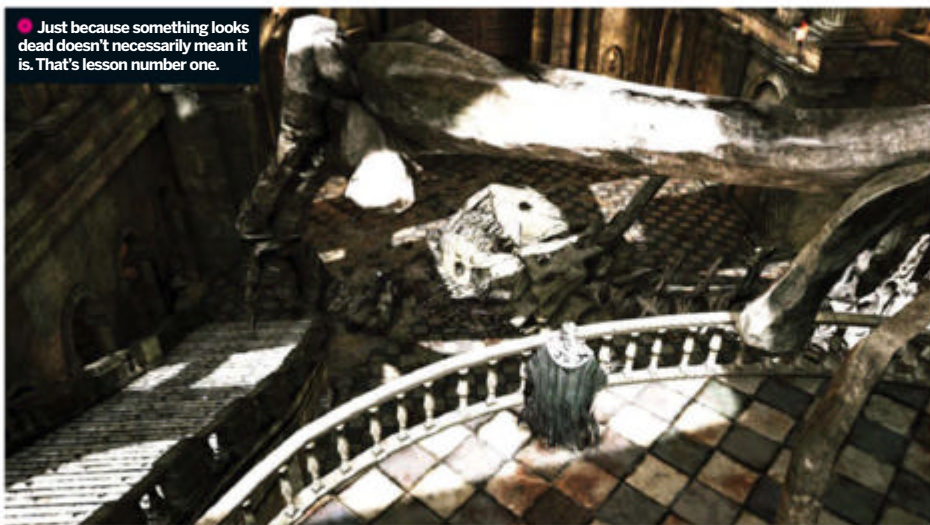
During one section of the gameplay demonstration, we saw the player enter a rundown fortress before lighting a familiar bonfire. The atmosphere of this area retained that sense of gloomy despair that the series is known for, and as the player used a ladder to reach the building's lower depths, we saw how the contrast between light and dark will play a key role – much like it did in the Tomb of the Giants. And instead of relying on the Skull Lantern to light your way, you can hold a torch in your off-hand so that you don't get ambushed in the dark by an undead corpse playing possum.

One thing that made the first two games stand out was the wide range of varied enemy designs. Players had to tackle everything from curse-happy Basilisks and sneaky Mimics that posed as treasure chests to durable Black Knights and irritating Bonewheel Skeletons that could mow you down in seconds. *Dark Souls II* looks set to continue this tradition with new enemy types that include blackened salamanders and a troll-like creature ➤





● Just because something looks dead doesn't necessarily mean it is. That's lesson number one.



● We're not sure if a plunging attack would be advisable in this case but it has to be worth a try.



● Even a lowly wolf can cause you grievous bodily harm if you're not properly equipped.



SOUL MAN

We speak to *Dark Souls II* co-director, Yui Tanimura, about the art of dealing death in a compelling way

How does the difficulty of the first and second *Dark Souls* games compare?

The game is not going to become easier. What we meant by making it more accessible was to streamline all the tediousness so we can deliver a lean, direct and pure challenging experience.

The next-gen consoles are being revealed. The PlayStation 4 has been revealed and your game will likely be very close to its release. Did you consider a next-gen version instead?

We understand that the next gen is coming up. It'd be a lie to say we didn't consider it at all. But right now there's no intent to have *Dark Souls* on next-gen. We feel the potential for current gen is still there and we want to deliver it to current-gen consoles.

One of the main issues of the first *Dark Souls* was its erratic frame-rate? Do you think the new engine will solve this issue?

Yes, one of the reasons we implemented a new engine was to cater for the drop in frame-rate. For this title, we're hoping players won't have to worry about this issue. We're confident that the new engine will help to solve this.

What did you learn from the online behaviour of players in *Dark Souls*, and how have you reacted to it in the sequel?

Dark Souls was more of a P2P game so we weren't able to analyse many stats in terms of player behaviour patterns. That's why we spent time looking at player feedback instead. We won't take *all* the feedback into consideration as that would be impractical, but it has been invaluable in making *Dark Souls II* more balanced.

Will any equipment be carried over from the first *Dark Souls* to *Dark Souls II*? And with online being even more of a focus, how will this affect the game?

We can't give you much information at this point, but there will be things that carry over from *Dark Souls*. There will be adjustments and there will be some carry-over. In terms of network, again, there will be more follow-up information, but because this game will be server-based, we hope to implement some interesting new features. We want to utilise the servers as much as possible to deliver new experiences.

We've seen a grim reaper-style character design and there's been a lot of speculation about the Morality system. Can you tell us anything about that?

In terms of the design of the world and the enemies, we've used the same design concepts. We also wanted to implement death variations for the emotional feedback of the fans. The enemy designs will be a reflection of what we want players to feel.

We saw quite an elaborate setpiece – the Dragon Altar – where players walked along a giant rope-bridge which broke, sending them to a dramatic death. Is it hard to maintain that balance of fairness versus cheap deaths?

The balancing between those is extremely difficult. It's something we always keep in mind. But no matter what kind of death we want the player to experience, we make sure that they understand the reason for dying. Killing players is easy, but I think it's important that they learn from their deaths. It's a fine balance. That bridge is actually a surprise feature. We don't want it so that every time you go on the bridge, you die no matter what. That's not the case. We'll leave hints and clues so players can try and anticipate what's going to happen. Hopefully players will understand that everything has a certain amount of meaning in terms of deaths leading to success.

PREVIEW



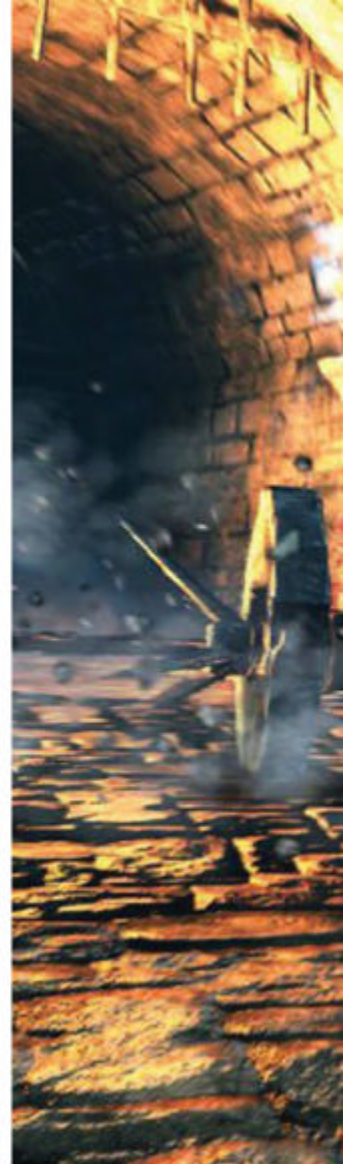
● It's pretty much a given that the parry and riposte system will return for players who like to fight flashy.



● The fact that the bonfires are still present is further evidence that this is a prequel.



● If you thought this guy was going to make it to the other side then you must be one hell of an optimist.



INVADERS MUST DIE

The potential benefits of leaving the old P2P system behind

WHENEVER A MISCHIEVOUS player used a Red Eye Orb to invade another online world, the game used a peer-to-peer connection that linked the two consoles together. In contrast, *Dark Souls II* will switch to a server-based system that will run the connection remotely. This could mean that multiple players could invade the same world at once or that teams of players could team up *Monster Hunter*-style to take down a particularly tricky boss. The jury's still out on what new online features will feature in the game but it's clear that From Software is thinking way beyond the ghostly warnings.





● If you don't dive out the way in time then this Silver Chariot can run you over for an instant kill.

● The ability to move and shoot could make the bows a more enticing proposition.

> that can throw its oversized axes for seemingly lethal damage. Fortunately, it looks like you can parry these spinning blades with a well-timed attack of your own before moving in for the kill.

Out of all the creatures we've seen so far, the Ninja Turtle wannabe is the most intriguing. That's not because it wields a huge mace that can flatten you like a pancake but because the shell on its back makes it immune to backstabs. Try to jab it from the rear and the lumbering juggernaut will jump backwards in an attempt to crush you under its shell. This makes us wonder if you'll find a similar suit of armour that keeps your six safe whenever another player invades your world with a fleet-footed assassin. Maybe there'll even be a special dagger called the "can-opener" that can bypass this armour entirely. Who knows?

Focusing back on what we do know, it appears that certain enemies now have the ability to break through doors and barriers. This was showcased towards the end of the gameplay demonstration

when the player came across a cell door in the Mansion of the Dragons. Peering through the bars was a Cyclops-like creature that seemed unfazed by the player's passing. But that swiftly changed when the player fired an arrow into its solitary eye, causing the beast to smash through the door in a fit of rage. What's interesting to note is that the player was able to move and shoot at the same time while the short-bow was equipped.

We highly doubt you'll be able to shimmy about with anything as large as the Dragonslayer Greatbow from the last game but it's good to know that From Software is evolving the series beyond the classic *Resident Evil* approach to shooting. And yet aside from a few curious things like the absence of the Humanity gauge, it appears that the team isn't changing the general flow of the game too dramatically. If anything, *Dark Souls II* is looking like a methodical refinement that adds polish to the original framework. This is especially true when you compare the stability of the

new engine against the frame-rate issues of the previous outing.

One thing that's hard about writing a *Dark Souls II* preview is that we'd rather not spoil any of the surprises for when the game is finally released. We know that when we walk into the aforementioned mansion, for instance, the dragon skeleton that lies in the centre of the hallway will briefly reanimate in an attempt to kill us. It'll probably be a small detail in the grand scheme of things but part of the series' appeal is the tangible mystery that shrouds every corner of the dark yet mesmerisingly beautiful world. We know that there's still a long time to wait but it's telling that seeing *Dark Souls II* in action makes us want to play through *Dark Souls* again. Needless to say, challenge accepted.

Dark Souls II is being handled by none other than From Software, the same mastermind that brought us the *Armored Core* series. Head on over to the official page for more info: www.preparetodie.com

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- More likely to push you over and kick you than hold your hand
- A dark fantasy world where everything wants you dead and even death offers no release
- Many more elaborate ways to meet your cruel and unusual demise
- It's looking just as unapologetically hardcore as we remember

READ ME

Tanimura described how the Mansion of the Dragons is a place where experiments were conducted on dragons in the past. Colour us intrigued.



RELEASE DATE: 17 SEPTEMBER

● An immediate second tackle will aid those with particularly bad timing.

FIFA 14

The football is literally going on forever



● Spectacular shots may become commonplace with the new shooting mechanics.



"It's not getting harder, it's getting more fun," said Nick Cannon, executive producer, as he took a room full of games critics through the much harder and less fun technical aspects of *FIFA 14*. Indeed, those who crave this year's release will be happy to see the game take another half-step towards total simulation football, but those who play with a couple of cans of nondescript Australian lager on a Saturday night in with the lads will likely just be frustrated and bemused.

FIFA 14 will undoubtedly be this year's most anticipated worldwide game patch. The updates that we saw suggest that this year's *FIFA* delicately dabbles in the minutiae. This is to be expected from a game that is released yearly and is a sports simulation game; it's not as if they can invent a new story to work around like *Call Of Duty*. Or maybe they could? Imagine cutscenes of Arsene Wenger, crying, on his knees outside of Old Trafford, drinking from a brown paper bag, shouting 'WHY, ROBIN? WHY?'. Actually, that might work – unread this paragraph.

FIFA 11 was the peak of all previous *FIFA* games; it squeezed every drop out of the old engine. *FIFA 12* was ground zero for the new Player Impact Engine and

FIFA 13 was the first in a long, long line of tweaks and polishes. *FIFA 14* is the 'this time it's personal' for said tweaks and polishes. Anyway, here's a round-up of the new features.

Tactical defending

Upcoming improvements include revised teammate intelligence and off-the-ball runs where teammates will spot more attacking opportunities than before and make more informed runs, whilst holding off defenders who could scupper the attack. And, for balance, defenders will have improved run-tracking, tighter man-marking and spot more opportunities to thwart an attack.

The controversial tactical defending system that some (us) are yet to master has finally been changed to accommodate itchy trigger fingers. Players will now have the opportunity to do an immediate second tackle should the first lunge at the opposition player completely miss, so recovery time from a failed tackle won't feel so infuriating.

Protecting the ball

Keeping hold of the ball, too, has been de-furiated. Cannon admitted that the dedicated feature was mostly unused by players because of how difficult it was to

master. Now, however, players will be able to protect the ball, whether in attack or defence, by simply pressing L2. We were shown a video of the master at protecting the ball, Didier Drogba, holding up the ball as he receives it and laying it off to a team mate. It wasn't clear from the footage we saw, but simplifying protecting the ball should mean that opposition players clattering into you won't mean you're automatically dispossessed anymore.

Shooting & attacking

The new shooting mechanic looks like it will be the first thread to feature in the EA complaint forums come this September. Players won't just be able to shoot from any position any more and have RVP pull off a near-perfect shot. No, the accuracy, quality and strength of shot will be depend on the player's body shape at the moment of shot (or 'snap', as it's known) and proximity to the ball. Previously, the computer would slide your player into place to make the shot. Now, the player will attempt to reposition himself in order to make the shot, which he won't always be able to do. It's much more realistic but it's going to be this year's big learning curve. The mechanics of the ball, too, are less linear now, we're assured. The ball will



take different flight paths depending on the type of ball, the spin and how it's struck – curving and looping all over the shop. Expect your mates to make a lot of 'NASA space programme' jokes. This does mean, however, that you can score some spectacular curving shots with a lot more power – Cannon said he wanted the player to experience the raw thrill of hitting the ball perfectly with an exceptionally powerful shot.

Build-up play will be rewarded with better team movement, so you won't be stuck passing between the back four waiting for someone to do something. But we're assured that those of us who like to play with Championship teams won't be penalised for playing long and direct (as the actress said to the bishop). And if you like to play over-the-top, skills have been 'simplified' to just the right stick, so now you'll be able to

accidentally pull off tricks with a quick flick of the stick. Cool.

Add-ons

Skill games and Manager Mode both make reappearances with improved features such as one-time pass shooting practice for skill improvement, and a new global scouting network that allows you to choose players based on attributes rather than skill points for Manager Mode.

Cannon was surprisingly cavalier about FIFA 13's problems that FIFA 14 aims to fix, which was refreshing. But we fear that the improved teammate intelligence and shooting mechanic will be discarded on next year's cutting room floor with Nick saying in a FIFA 15 press event 'We've improved that annoying shooting feature...'

FIFA 14 is being developed by EA Sports. More information can be found at www.ea.com/uk/FIFA

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Real Ball Physics means that you'll be able to re-create your poor real-life shooting in-game
- The new improved 'protect the ball' mechanic means you can finally shout 'BALL HOGGER!' at friends in-game

- Tackling will be less of a chore with the new second chance tackle mechanic
- We have absolutely no information on next gen or handheld games, so that's a surprise you can look forward to

READ ME

The new Global Scouting Network, which is accessible all season round, means you can send scouts to anywhere in the world and find the new Messi.



INTERVIEW WITH NICK CANNON

We sit in silence for ten minutes with FIFA 14's executive producer

Is there still a place for the casual FIFA player?

Ultimately we're trying to make the most fun experience possible. We've been successful over the last few years and all types of players are playing the game. When you sell a lot of games it means that it's not just hardcore people that are playing; the game appeals to that broad spectrum: hardcore and casual. For some people this is the only game they buy each year. It's something we're very conscious of and it's something that we always try to balance. We've got five different difficulties in the game and ultimately there are the harder levels for the hardcore players and easier levels for the casual player – it's all about entertainment. The simulation aspect is making it as realistic as possible but it's got to balance with fun.

Are there any PS3 exclusives you can reveal for our loyal fans?

Can't say.

Multiplayer – how has that changed?

Can't say.

Will there be an improvement on the previous Vita version?

Can't say.

Can you say anything about Lounge Mode? Will that make a reappearance?

We took that out in FIFA 12 and at the moment we don't have any plans to bring it back. We felt that it wasn't engaging the consumer.

FIFA 11 was the best you could do with those mechanics and FIFA 12 was the beginning of a new adventure of self improvement – how many more games before you feel you've done all you can with the new engine?

Ultimately for us, what we're doing is making the best game every year. I don't see us running out of ideas. How we improve gameplay and innovate is still key – how we innovate Career mode and improve online, there's still plenty for us to do. So I don't see that coming any time soon. All the things I know we can't get to this year, that we'd like to, I'm confident that we'll be able to use in years to come.

When you say things you can't get to this year...

Can't say.

We should have expected that. What is the defining feature of FIFA 14?

The standout feature is probably the shooting – that's what is resonating with the game's testers. It's that very visual 'wow'. We showed that final video to you guys [the press] and it was a wow moment for us because it was like 'Yes, this looks fantastic', and that's going to be the one that the people really enjoy. Also, tidying up the marking has really changed the game and will change the way people play. Ultimately having to think about different ways to get people mark. It's not harder, it's just varying your play and I think that's going to be a lot more enjoyable for people.

PREVIEW

RELEASE DATE: Q2 2013

Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger

Let's all just pretend The Cartel never happened, okay?



"I was trapped behind a stagecoach," says Silas Greaves from the depths of some musty old-West bar. "And those boys came at me over the cliff like Apaches. Now, see the thing with Apaches is, they don't never stop comin'." In-game, 30 Apaches rush us and start shooting. Silas, our character, is narrating his life story as we play. "Wait," asks a kid. "How come you was fightin' Apaches?" We duck behind the wheel and shove six bullets into our revolver as shots thud into the dirt around us.

"Naw, I wasn't fightin' Apaches," Silas says, and all the Native Americans disappear as the screen whites out. "They came at me like Apaches!" 30 more men swarm over the cliffs, this time in traditional cowboy garb, and we carry on shooting. Right off the bat, *Gunslinger* does some interesting things with its story. We've seen our fair share of flashbacks, for sure, but playing the story that someone else is imagining is new. And that's super.

There's a frantic time-attack feel to the gameplay; the weapons lean towards the short-ranged, inaccurate end of the spectrum but the best means of getting a high score is to chain multiple trick-shot kills together to boost your combo and earn more bullet-time for your meter. You're forced into close-quarters gunfights more often than not, and kept on your feet by a variety of cel-shaded goons.

There are Quick-Time Events, which are forgiving and generally focus on spinning around in some town square and gunning down four men standing on rooftops. Or enforced bullet-time sections where you're encouraged to kill six men before you hit the ground. Or duels with a strong sense of honour about them, gauged around whether you draw first.

Plus, the game drips with character. For example, when you grab your first shotgun, you don't just grab it off the floor. You notice it on the wall, and Silas talks about how Sheriff Bob Ollinger left it there. There's a swishy comic book-style intro for it – for a shotgun, mind, an inanimate object – and after you grab it, Silas mentions that it can probably blow a man right in half. And then you blow a man right in half with it.

All told, it factors cleverly – very cleverly for a downloadable title – into telling a clearly false story, a tall tale spun by a wizened gunfighter and amped up in the head of a enthusiastic fan, which lets the writers get away with far more than they should while sounding vaguely authentic.

In the long term, there are three skill trees that you can plonk XP into: Gunslinger (mid-range quick-firing revolvers), Ranger (hanging back and using a rifle) or Trapper (short-range shotgun carnage) and they seem to be skewed towards encouraging a certain play style rather than acting as entirely separate classes, and that's fine, we guess. The skill trees factor heavily into the Arcade mode, a corridor strewn with baddies and carelessly placed explosives, where they give you an option to pick a weapon and a set of skills before you start.

Of course, as this is a downloadable title, all the fun's going to be a little short-lived, and on first impressions that seems like a shame. Techland is more than making up for its unfathomable misstep with *The Cartel*, offering an experience that's not strictly new, but is, importantly, a) cheap and b) interesting. Let's hope it's not too short to make an impact.

Call Of Juarez: Gunslinger is being developed by Techland Studios. For more info go to callofjuarez.com.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Stylised visuals remind us of an old-timey *Borderlands*
- Some clever *Prince Of Persia*-style storytelling
- Firing two revolvers at once is perennially enjoyable
- Combo-based score attack gameplay lends urgency

READ ME

Silas Greaves has fought with, or alongside, anyone who's anyone in the Wild West. You are him. Well, you're him telling an embellished version of his life story to an impressionable kid.



● "Okay boys, let's hope this one has some gold in it. The first 13 were rubbish."



● Walking into town is a tense business, especially when you're a wanted outlaw with a garish poncho.



● Dynamite is an important tool, so long as you like blowing stuff up (Hint: you like blowing stuff up).



ROOTIN' TOOTIN' HIGHFALUTIN SHOOTIN'

You'll spend a lot of time shooting people in the face

GUNSLINGER USES A combo system to encourage you to kill folk as quickly – and as stylishly – as possible. Each kill multiplies the value of subsequent murders for a few seconds, and as your skill trees run off the points you earn from all the murder, it's in your best interests to do well here.

Headshots are a good start – clipping folk while they're dashing between cover, or when you're on your last drop of health, work well too. All told it gives a sense of finesse, reward and immediacy to a shooter that could have quite easily gone without.

● Coffins are big business in the Wild West, because you murder upwards of 50 men on a daily basis.



● Historical characters come thick and fast and the writers take plenty of liberties with the truth. Billy the Kid, pictured here, is shown as kind of a Wild West rockstar.

PREVIEW

RELEASE DATE: Q3 2013

Lego Marvel Super Heroes



Earth's mightiest heroes, now just an inch tall

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's a bloody *LEGO MARVEL GAME*!
- It's going to have Daredevil in it (hopefully)
- Over 100 characters! Dripping with fan service!
- You can create your own superhero and get involved

Lego Marvel Super Heroes is being developed by Traveller's Tales. Check the website for more details: <http://videogames.lego.com/en-gb/lego-marvel-super-heroes/about/features/>



READ ME

Another open-world Lego game, this time set in the Marvel universe. Over 100 playable superheroes and villains with enough fan service to make grown men (us) weep with joy.

✓ Big wide world

According to game director Arthur Parsons, one of the main settings for *Lego Marvel* will be an open-world take on Marvel's version of New York City. The free-roaming approach was great in *Lego Batman 2* so it's good to hear TT is taking the same route here. The range of playable characters should create a variety of ways to traverse the city and hopefully vehicles will also be available to cause havoc in. Remember the Spider-Mobile? Hopefully Traveller's Tales does. We don't yet know where else the game will visit but again, think of the opportunities. Lego Savage Land!

✓ Saves the day

The game's plot begins with Silver Surfer, ex-herald of Galactus, being knocked out of the sky. His surfboard shatters into several 'Cosmic Bricks' that fall to Earth, each containing immense power. Nick Fury, leader of S.H.I.E.L.D., calls upon the heroes of the Marvel universe to collect these blocks before they fall into evil hands. Galactus is confirmed to be the main villain but we are sure the story will take plenty of twists and turns with all manner of bad guys to vanquish. Imagine if you could actually play as Galactus...

✓ True believers

We've long enjoyed the Lego games here on Play and last year's *Lego Batman 2* was a great example of why. An open world, simple but compulsive gameplay and more comic characters than you could shake a brick at. Now it's Marvel's turn to receive the plastic treatment and we couldn't be happier. Thanks to the hugely successful films, Marvel is more popular than ever, so the time is just right for a Lego flavoured fan service explosion. This combination of two huge brands is sure to be a big success among gamers of all ages.



✓ All the superheroes

Lego games are known for having huge casts of playable characters and *Lego Marvel* is promising over 100 superheroes and villains in mini brick form for the player to control. Each will have their trademark powers: Spider-Man can web swing, Hulk can throw huge objects around and Iron Man can fly and fire lasers at foes. The potential here is enormous and seeing some more obscure characters like Moon Knight, the Inhumans, Black Panther or Captain Britain would be seriously cool. We can't wait to see Daredevil and Hawkeye.



✗ Same old bricks

Lego games are great fun, but it's unavoidable that they are all pretty similar, and have been for some time. *Batman 2*'s jump to an open world setting and use of voice acting showed a bit of progression, but the core action-platformer gameplay and collecting loads of stuff has remained consistent throughout. It's still enjoyable, but is it getting a bit tired? Perhaps. Still, the strength of the franchise is a large part of how good a Lego game is, and we have faith that playing in the Marvel universe will still be awesome fun.



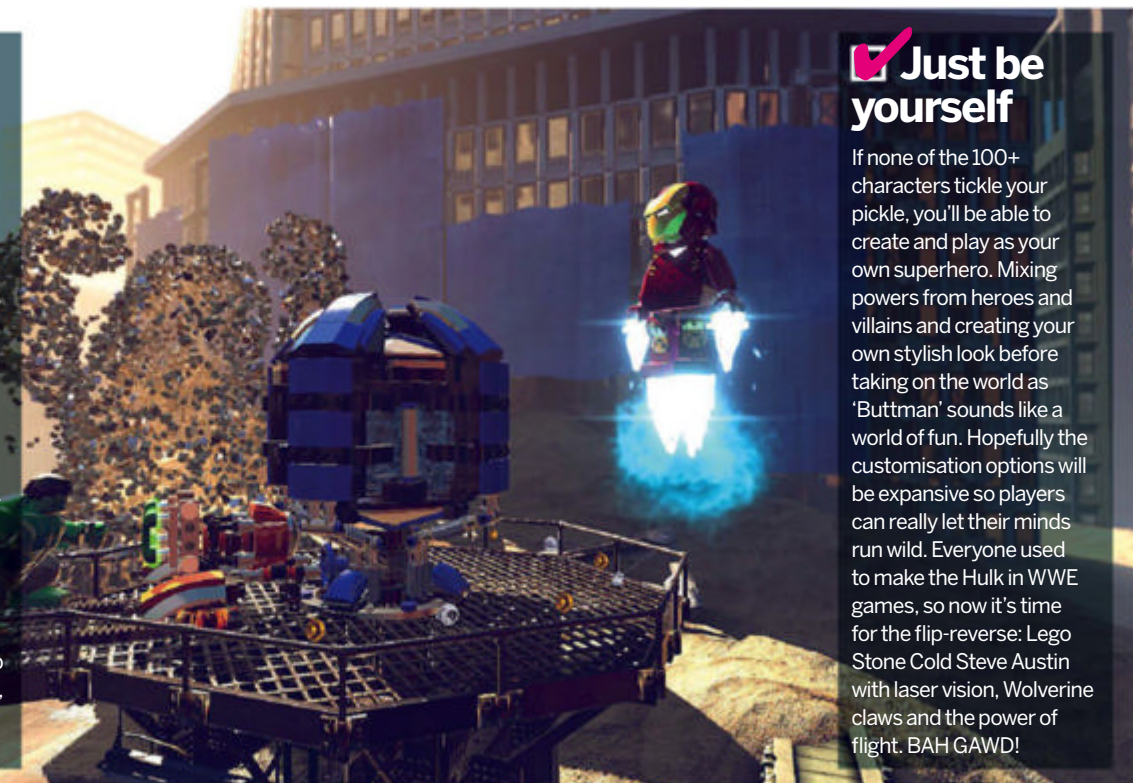
✓ For the fans

Comic enthusiasts like ourselves loved *Lego Batman 2* to bits for its huge cast and knowing references to the source material. As in it had The Flash in it, so it was awesome. Lego Marvel seems to be going even further to show nerds a good time and it's clear the team love their comics. With Deadpool as a playable character, we can't wait to see the kind of fourth-wall breaking that the merc with a mouth will get up to. Strictly PG this time, Wade, so watch that potty mouth of yours.

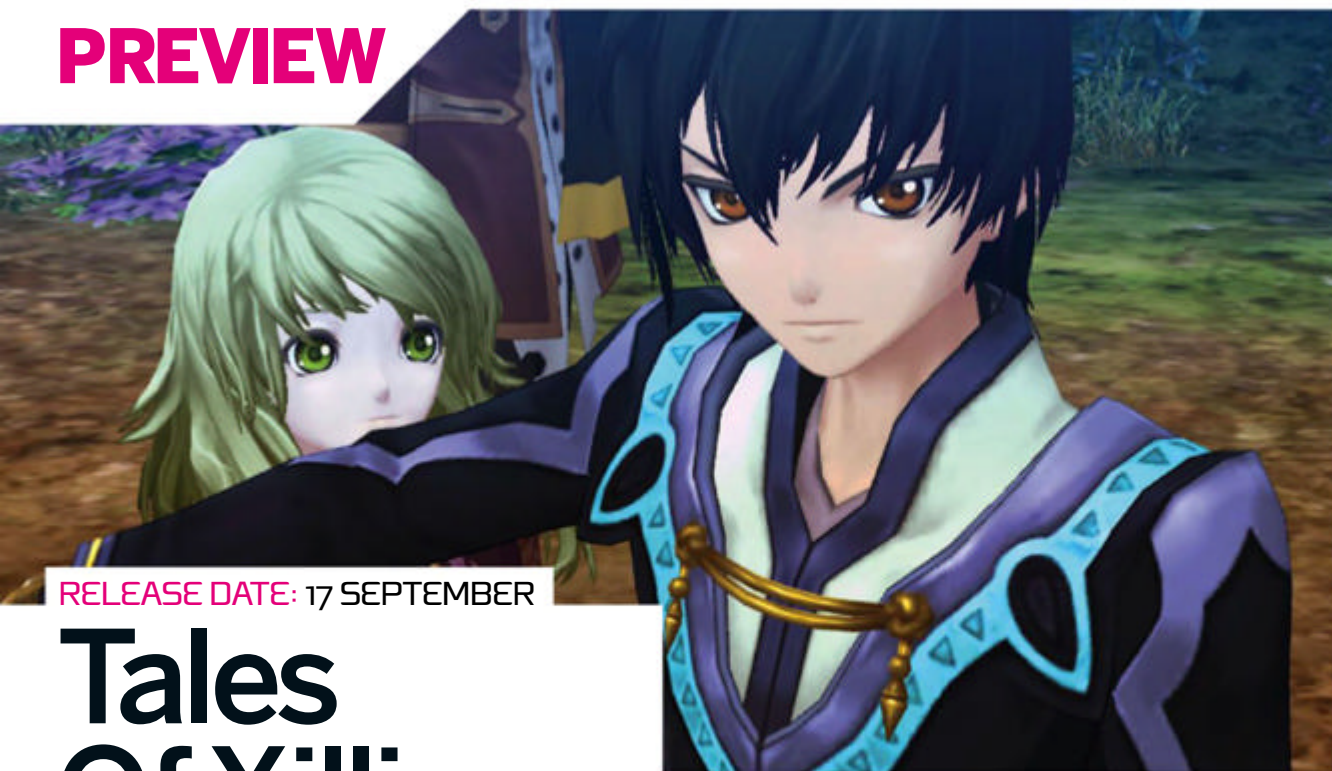


✓ Just be yourself

If none of the 100+ characters tickle your pickle, you'll be able to create and play as your own superhero. Mixing powers from heroes and villains and creating your own stylish look before taking on the world as 'Buttman' sounds like a world of fun. Hopefully the customisation options will be expansive so players can really let their minds run wild. Everyone used to make the Hulk in WWE games, so now it's time for the flip-reverse: Lego Stone Cold Steve Austin with laser vision, Wolverine claws and the power of flight. BAH GAWD!



PREVIEW



RELEASE DATE: 17 SEPTEMBER

Tales Of Xillia

Otherwise known as
Stories About Stuff

PS3 It might have taken the best part of two years, but PS3-exclusive Japanese RPG hit *Tales Of Xillia* is finally hitting European shores. JRPG fans in the West will be well-versed in *Final Fantasy* and the more die-hard will enjoy *Dragon Quest*, but *Tales* is a series that has yet to find as huge a footing over here. *Tales Of Symphonia* on GameCube elevated the franchise from its previous obscurity and it's been slowly gaining ground ever since. Last year's *Tales Of Graces f*, an enhanced port of the Wii original, was a decent traditional JRPG, and *Xillia* is shaping up to be more old-school number crunching fun. Play was lucky enough to sit down and have a chat with Hideo Baba, brand manager of the *Tales* franchise.

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- It's got beautiful anime-style graphics.
- A crazy, fast battle system unlike any other JRPG.
- The first *Tales* game to be developed specifically for PS3.
- Choose from two characters to change how you experience the story.

READ ME

Jude Mathis and the mysterious Milla Maxwell set out on an epic journey to uncover an ancient conspiracy and learn lots of lovely life lessons along the way. Standard.

Tales Of Xillia is being developed by Namco Tales Studio. Check the website for more details: <http://tox.namco-ch.net/>



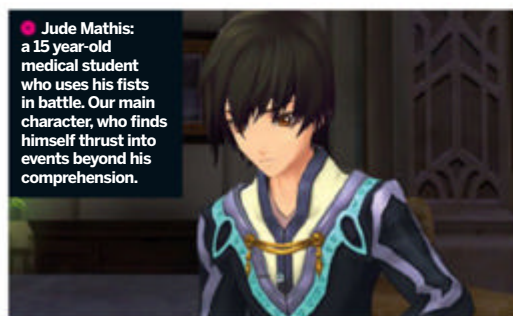
TO BATTLE!

Tales is famous for its idiosyncratic real-time battle system. Fights go by in a flash, often lasting a mere few seconds – it's a world away from the average turn-based JRPG scrap. With four characters throwing out flashy attacks and magic spells at the same time, things can get pretty hectic. "I think

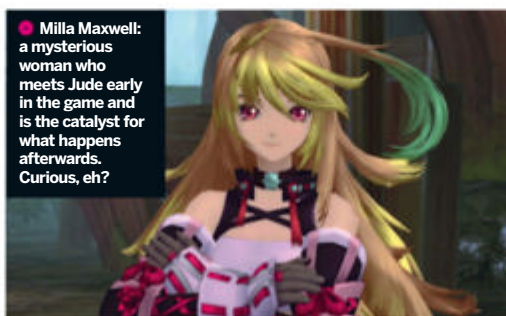
one of the secrets that has kept the series popular over the years is the unique real-time battle system that is totally action packed," says Baba. "Every time, we tweak it by adding new features or improving the speed or other things, keeping it fresh while retaining that same core feel."

MEET THE FAM

These are but a few of the doe-eyed characters you'll meet along your journeys.



● **Jude Mathis:** a 15 year-old medical student who uses his fists in battle. Our main character, who finds himself thrust into events beyond his comprehension.



● **Milla Maxwell:** a mysterious woman who meets Jude early in the game and is the catalyst for what happens afterwards. Curious, eh?



● **Alvin:** a cool mercenary who travels the world and always gets the job done. He's so dreamy. Not a chipmunk.



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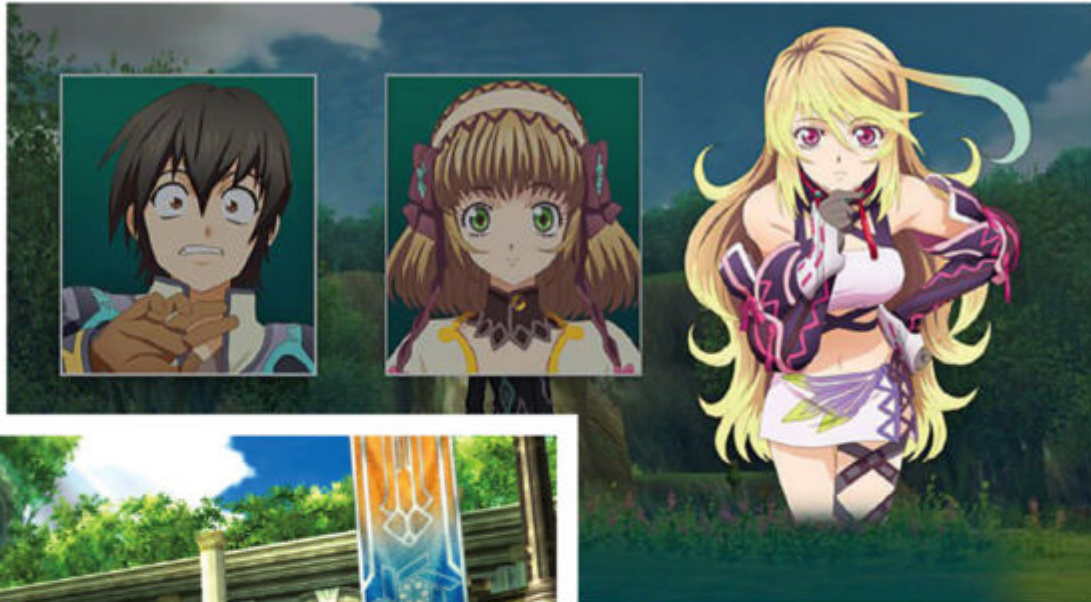
STORY MAKERS

"To begin the process of putting the story together, I explain the hero," says Baba. "Their profile, their purpose, their way of thinking and background. I try to make it clear what drives them, why they do what they do in the game. Next, I add a rough overview of the entire plot so the storywriters can go into more detail and flesh out how everything happens." For the first time, *Xillia* will offer the choice of two characters to new players, differing their first experiences with the story and the world it takes place in. The two quickly meet up, however – this is still a linear, driven narrative experience rather than an open-ended one like *Skyrim* or *Dark Souls*.

THEMATIC RESONANCE

4

Each *Tales* game has a core theme that the story revolves around, shaping the characters and plot. According to Baba, it's something he puts a lot of thought into. "When it comes to the core theme of each new game, we pay attention to the social issues of the world today and try to reflect them in the game. We try to make it so anyone in the world can understand the social themes in the games. It's a very important point of the series and we pay a lot of attention to how we come to that core theme." Baba wouldn't tell us what the theme of *Tales Of Xillia* is, preferring players discover it for themselves.



5

PLAYING FAVOURITES

When asked what his favourite game of the series was, Baba knew exactly what his answer was. "I have been asked this question so many times but my answer is always the same: *Tales Of Phantasia*, the first instalment in the series. *Phantasia* created a great foundation for the franchise. The storyline, the fantasy world and the real-time battle system all had a huge impact at the time. We utilise these elements every time to create a new take on the franchise." *Xillia* was a massive hit in Japan, attaining both critical acclaim and millions of sales, so the team have clearly done a good job in reinventing those core principles.



RELEASE DATE: TBC

Armored Core: Verdict Day

Like Gundam, only set on Planet Grey

What goes well with big robots? BIG GUNS.

Beats our Renault Clio by quite some margin.



A persistent battle with multiple fronts – pretty cool.

PS3

From Software is a talented bunch. Not only did it make our favourite game of this generation in *Dark Souls*, its been pumping out the giant robot-packed *Armored Core* series for years. Never quite reaching the highs of the *Souls* series, *Armored Core* has still earned a loyal fanbase thanks to its strategic blend of mech customisation and complex combat.

Armored Core: Verdict Day follows hot on the heels of last year's *Armored Core V*, and players of the previous game will be able to import their save data and use their existing mechs. The focus this time seems to be on online warfare between opposing factions, battling over scarce natural resources.

Online 'seasons' will take place over 56 maps, players signing up to one of three factions to join the fight and blow up some big robots. A constant battle for territory and resources is waged until the season ends, where the points are totted up and the winners awarded before

everyone's stats are reset and it starts all over again. A bit like the Premier League but with massive bastard mechs.

Operator Mode is also returning, expanded to allow control over a full squad of mechs, essentially trading action for real-time strategy. Operators will be able to see the cockpit views of each of their pilots, marking targets and setting rally points in real-time.

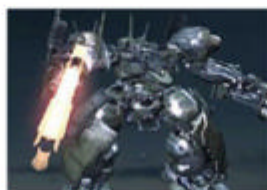
Solo players will still be able to enjoy themselves too, with AI partners replacing otherwise human roles, but online seems to be the way From Software is intending people to play *Verdict Day*. A constant online battlefield with enormous robot suits sounds like our kind of thing – especially after *Lost Planet 2* did something similar and it was *awesome* – so we are looking forward to finding out more in the months leading up to launch.

Armored Core: Verdict Day is being developed by From Software. Check the web site for more details: www.armoredcoregame.com

CHICKS DIG GIANT ROBOTS

So do dudes. Everyone, actually.

YOU CAN ARGUE the quality of the *Armored Core* franchise, but one thing unquestionable is that everyone thinks giant mechs are properly cool. Creating and customising your own unique robot of death has always been the best thing about the series and the option to import your existing mech from *Armored Core V* is a neat touch that fans will be sure to appreciate.



WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Huge bloody robots you can customise to your heart's content
- Import and use your existing *Armored Core V* mech
- A persistent online war where every player counts
- Improved Operator mode for strategy fans

READ ME

Persistent online wars fought over 52 maps in massive customisable mechs, *Armored Core: Verdict Day* also improves the strategy-based Operator mode and allows use of existing *ACV* saves.

VROOM!



RELEASE DATE: 21 JUNE

Can none of these guys drive the thing upright?

MotoGP 13

Four wheels good, two wheels better

PS3 Motorbikes are cool, and driving them really fast is even cooler. Unfortunately, dying in a bloody, broken heap is less cool, so thank videogames for letting us live out our speed demon fantasies and living to tell the tale.

MotoGP 13 is a sort-of reboot to the franchise, the first game in the series we've seen for a couple of years. Think Formula 1 on bikes and you've got the basic gist of things. This is a simulation, and trying to powerslide round bends like in *Burnout* will quickly send you arse-over-handlebars. Careful speed control and considered racing lines are the keys to success here.

The game will be fully licensed, containing the entire MotoGP, Moto2 and Moto3 2013 championships and packed full of official teams, tracks, riders and bikes. If that means something to you, congratulations. For the rest of us, it amounts to loads of going really fast on a variety of tracks, and that sounds good to **Play**.

From the little we've played it's

easy to see that this is a proper simulation. The physics engine manages 300 parameters for the vehicle and engine, over 100 of those just for the tyres, taking into account every force involved between the rubber and the tarmac. Technology, eh? It's pretty impressive. Everything can be tweaked and customised, tiny changes affecting performance in big ways. *Gran Turismo* fans should feel right at home.

Games like this are obviously intended primarily for existing fans of the sport, but the primal thrill of driving fast on a bike means that *MotoGP 13* should have a decent amount of crossover appeal. With online and split-screen (yes!) multiplayer and regular updates keeping things relevant with the real-world, *MotoGP 13* is shaping up to be a good time for anyone who likes to go fast. Which, surely, is most of us.

MotoGP 13 is being developed by Milestone. Check the web site for more details: <http://pqube.co.uk/motogp2013/overview/>

WHAT MAKES THIS GAME GREAT?

- Drive really powerful bikes, really fast.
- Fully licensed for the MotoGP nerds out there.
- Customise your ride to an incredibly precise degree.
- Split-screen multiplayer! Remember that?

READ ME

MotoGP 13 is back in a reboot of sorts and more in-depth than ever. Fully licensed with hundreds of bikes, riders, teams and tracks, motorbike fans are in for a treat.



He's literally touching the road. If he was playing Floor Is Lava, he'd be dead.

This is probably a real course. Fans will recognise it!



UP TO SPEED

Isn't the internet great?

A **CONSTANTLY INTERNET-UPDATED** feed of events and challenges will keep *MotoGP 13* relevant with the real-world happenings of the season later this year. Watching a race on TV before reliving it in the game sounds pretty sweet to us. We've yet to see exactly how this will be implemented, but it seems like a cool way of keeping the title up to date.

☒ **YES!** I would like to subscribe to **Play**

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BATTLE



BATTLEFIELD 4



BATTLEFIELD IS KNOWN FOR ITS HECTIC ONLINE MULTIPLAYER, BUT BATTLEFIELD 4 IS LOOKING TO REINVENT THE SERIES FROM A SINGLE-PLAYER PERSPECTIVE TOO...

Call Of Duty may be the alpha papa of the FPS world, but many gamers prefer the scope and variety of Battlefield 3 for their online shooting antics. Famous for its huge maps, Battlefield dismisses the tight corridor shooting of Call Of Duty in favour of open worlds with a variety of options, including planes, jeeps, helicopters, tanks and mopeds for players to commandeer. It's a formula that's been constantly refined since the first game, WWII-era *Battlefield 1942*, and has remained fiercely popular ever since. Thousands of people still play *1942*, *Battlefield 2*, even the *Bad Company* games, and when added to the millions who enjoy *Battlefield 3* on a regular basis, it's a series with a serious following.

In an attempt to outdo *Call Of Duty*, *Battlefield 3* introduced a single-player campaign to the main series for the first time. Streamlined, linear and forcefully epic, it did a good job of trying to be a *COD* game, but failed to capture what people enjoy about *Battlefield* in the first place. There was no sandbox, there were no choices to be made in how to tackle objectives and no enormous open levels. It wasn't bad, but it wasn't *Battlefield*.

Of course, most serious FPS gamers consider single-player to be little more than a distraction, and thankfully the multiplayer of *Battlefield 3* was more than up to par.

It's interesting then that for our first look of *Battlefield 4*, DICE chose to show off only its new campaign >



BATTLEFIELD 4



> and speak nothing of multiplayer. Currently only confirmed for PS3, PC and Xbox 360, *Battlefield 4* is running on the new Frostbite 3 engine (that's one up from its predecessor, engine fans) and looks even more beautiful. Nothing has been said of next-gen platforms, but we will eat our hypothetical hats if we don't see a version of the game release on PlayStation 4 at some point in the not-so-distant future.

The campaign demo we saw opens in darkness with Bonnie Tyler's *Total Eclipse Of The Heart* – an odd way, you might think, to begin a game that revolves mainly around shooting people in the face. It's a neat little bit of thematic dissonance, the player's view slowly fading in to find themselves trapped in a rapidly sinking car. One thing leads to another and the game quickly cuts back to find out how we landed ourselves in this situation.

Players control Recker, one of a squad of four US operatives on some operation, somewhere. It's never really explained in the demo and doesn't seem like information necessary to enjoy the fireworks.

OMAR COMIN'

As consummate nerds, we are all massive fans of *The Wire* here at **Play**, so imagine our surprise when we noticed that Irish, one of the members of your squad, is played by none other than Michael K. Williams, better known as Omar from the famous show. After doing a little dance of glee, we composed ourselves and got back to business.

The first section was a tightly scripted area where Recker and pals must provide covering fire for Irish as he makes his way to them. So far, so *Call Of Duty*. Exiting the building, the four are ordered to

“We're extremely proud of *Battlefield 3* and we learned so much in how to relay a story and create relatable characters”



make their way to an extraction point, and it's here that things get interesting. Recker crests a hill and is greeted with a huge construction yard, birds flying overhead as the horizon stretches out for miles in every direction.

Recker has to get from one end to the other, but the specifics are left entirely up to the player. Hop in a gun-mounted jeep and go in all-guns blazing, or try to take a stealthy approach and avoid making too much noise? Enemies can be marked and targeted for air support if needed and Recker's team-mates offer smart support depending on the options he takes. With an open world, vehicles and multiple routes to victory, it almost feels like a multiplayer map. That is precisely the point, according to director Lars Gustavsson.

"We're extremely proud of *Battlefield 3* and we learned so



BATTLEFIELD THROUGH THE AGES

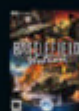
DESPITE WHAT THE TITLE MAY IMPLY, BATTLEFIELD 4 IS FAR FROM BEING THE FOURTH IN THE SERIES. HERE ARE A FEW MORE...

1942 2002



The original and, in the eyes of some, still the best. Huge, open warfare in a WWII setting, with vehicles to drive and fly and massive maps to control. *1942* offered multiplayer gameplay on a scale previously unseen in gaming, and was a massive hit. It's still played by thousands today, and rightly so.

VIETNAM 2004



A semi-sequel which moved the action to the Vietnam war and gave everything a lick of seventies style. It's our personal favourite of the series, thanks in part to the great soundtrack which could be played when driving vehicles, for all around to hear. CCR, Edwin Starr, The Troggs and of course Ride Of The Valkyries... good times.

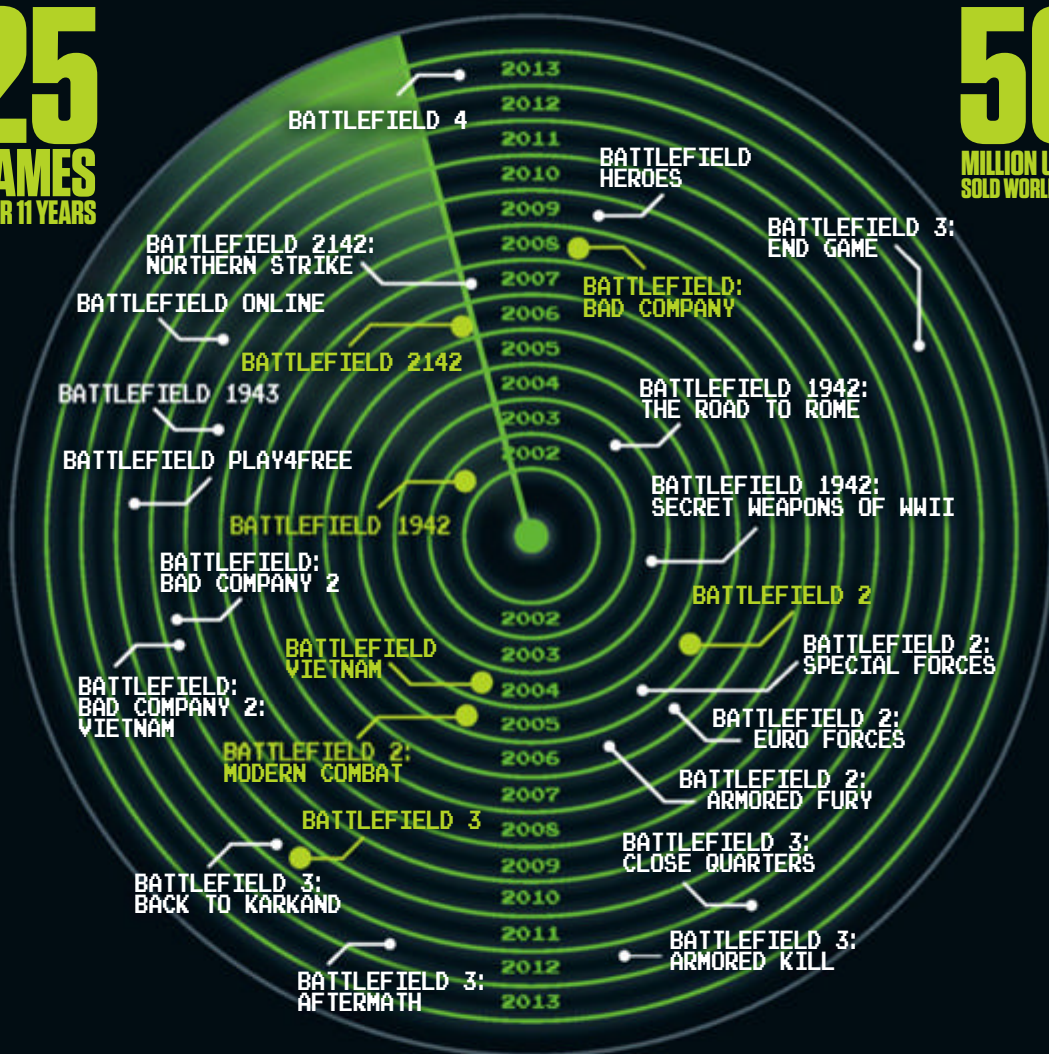
BATTLEFIELD 2 2005



Considered the high point of the series by many, *Battlefield 2* is where the series blew up to astronomical levels. Millions of people made the game, now with a modern setting, their shooter of choice, and still do to this day. When it comes to expertly balanced, compulsively challenging and simply great fun online games, few are better.

25
GAMES
OVER 11 YEARS

50
MILLION UNITS
SOLD WORLDWIDE

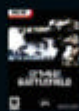


MODERN COMBAT 2005



A sort-of port of *Battlefield 2* and the first game in the series to hit consoles, *Modern Combat* wasn't quite as good as its namesake, pared down for what was at the time inferior hardware. Still, it was a good entry point for newcomers to the series and began a healthy relationship with home consoles.

2142 2006



The same *Battlefield* formula that had by this point become famous, but this time set in the future. Mechs, spaceships, giant floating bases to invade, blow up from the inside then escape pod away from – yeah, this game was pretty awesome. It tends to get forgotten about, which is a shame. Give it a look.

BAD COMPANY 2008



The first in the series to be developed explicitly for consoles, *Bad Company* featured a humorous team-based campaign mode and fully destructible terrain, as well as a host of multiplayer features. A sequel followed two years later and improved most everything – *Bad Company 2* is the best one on console.

BATTLEFIELD 3 2011



The most recent entry in the series, *Battlefield 3* was a huge success, earning great reviews and huge sales figures. The single-player campaign might have been average, but the online was as expansive and deep as we've come to expect from DICE. Great stuff, and we can't wait to see what happens next.

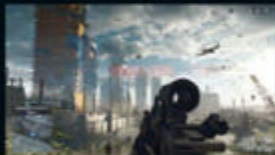
much in how to relay a story and create relatable characters. But at the same time, we felt afterwards that if there's one thing we messed up on, it was that extra *Battlefield* flavour. The things that we're so known for in multiplayer: the destruction, the choices, and the huge open sandbox.

"So think back to that open construction site – you can use the vehicle, you can rush straight in, you can use all the different tools that are available. It's up to you to play your story. But at certain times, there's a specific moment that we want you to experience. So we're not shying away from the fact we want to tell a story at the same time. We want you to create an experience and story yourself, and blend it with our own. Hopefully they flow seamlessly together and you stop caring about which one is which, because you're in for the journey." >



MAGIC MOMENTS

WE DISSECT THE GAMEPLAY FOOTAGE IN SEARCH OF A LITTLE MORE INFORMATION...



GO YOUR OWN WAY 06:05

While it starts out very follow-the-man familiar, the action soon opens up to allow far more freedom. DICE is keen to stress how much it is trying to inject elements of multiplayer into the solo campaign, so hopefully sections like this will allow as much freedom as they seem to – we'd love to think that entire areas could be avoided.



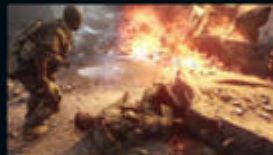
DRIVE ME CRAZY 07:43

Vehicles are a huge part of multiplayer but they seldom cross over into single-player outside of the odd setpiece. Here, though, if you see it, you can drive it. It's unlikely that this will extend to aircraft (since those would effectively allow you to skip entire levels) but we'll at least be able to go for a spin when we want to. Yay and stuff.



TOTAL DESTRUCTION 09:17

Demolition was pretty much the main hook of the *Bad Company* games and while *Battlefield 4* might not be on the same level, there's at least a degree of tactical destruction possible. Explosives can rip through concrete and create makeshift doors, shotguns tear through thin walls and flimsy structures crumble around a firefight.



CHOICE CUTS 14:22

The 'Press F to cut leg' moment is a bit of a joke, so we're hoping that this (and similar sequences) offer a degree of choice to the player. What happens if we don't cut the sergeant's leg off? Or if we elect not to follow a similarly daft on-screen prompt? Ideally, we'd be deciding to do these things, though it's more likely that they're fully scripted.

> We get a great example of this towards the end of the scene. Recker makes his way to the extraction point however he chooses but on entering the building, the action becomes more traditionally scripted. An enemy helicopter forces the team to sprint through shattering glass to their escape chopper, only for it to be shot down before their eyes, causing the entire building, already structurally unstable, to begin collapsing. What follows is a thrilling setpiece as Recker tries to flee the ruins as they fall around him. It's utterly ridiculous in an awesome, action movie way. More importantly, it shows how fluidly the game can flow from large open levels to linear sections without it feeling forced and artificial.

The gang make their escape in a hastily procured vehicle, leading



● Just let go, dude, it's not that far. Go on.



● Being a soldier doesn't appear to be the safest job in the world...



● Stick on Ride Of The Valkyries, throw on some shades and feel it.



FROSTBITTEN

BATTLEFIELD 4 USES DICE'S PROPRIETARY FROSTBITE 3 ENGINE, AND IT LOOKS AS GOOD AS EVER

The Frostbite 3 engine is capable of pumping out some beautiful graphics, and the extra time DICE has had to master its technical craft since *Battlefield 3* has led to even prettier scenes. According to Gustavsson, even the team that created the engine is still learning all the intricacies.

"To be honest, [the engine] is a beast and as we move on, we learn how to handle it and we learn to create with it. It has allowed us to build something no-one else can build.

"I was producer on *1942*, lead designer on *Battlefield 2*, lead designer on *Bad Company*. All of these games, we built the tech of the game at the same time, which meant we were struggling and working extra hard. Even *Battlefield 3*, since we were building the engine of the game at the same time. This time around we've already built Frostbite 3, we've got a special department within the studio to do it.

So I, as creative director of the game team, can focus on looking at it as a tool. Just like a magician, it's not the tricks you do but the outcome of it. Do you buy in on this trick or can you see the strings? So hopefully, that's what we can focus on and that's really what it means to me. Then the more we can make it scalable, the better."

to a chase scene that again would be perfect in a Schwarzenegger film, Irish briefly taking the wheel as Recker leans out the door and blasts a pursuing helicopter with a grenade launcher. It's pretty awesome. Such reckless driving leads to the car taking a nosedive into the sea, bringing us full-circle. It's been a breathless 15 minutes, blending the cinematic linearity we've come to expect from *Call Of Duty* with the open-world emergent gameplay *Battlefield* is famous for. One big question remains, though: what about multiplayer?

DICE declined to show anything of the online, despite multiplayer traditionally being the biggest selling point of the *Battlefield* franchise. It raises an interesting point: is a single-player campaign now a necessity when launching

“Great games come from people who have the dedication to say that they believe in what they are creating”

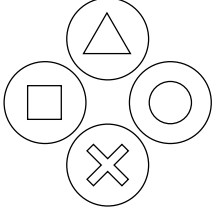
a new FPS game? Would a strictly multiplayer *Battlefield*, the path the series has taken for many years, be a viable option today?

"It's a good question. I guess *Battlefield 1943* (the recent downloadable-only game) was multiplayer only. In that respect, with that method of distribution, maybe it still is. I think overall, great games come from people who have the dedication to say they believe in what they are creating. We believe this is going to be a great experience. We have chosen to focus on a complete, single and multiplayer experience.

"So if we made it and used the right distribution, maybe online-only could work. But right now we're still extremely passionate about building a single-player experience... the best summary for me would be to see that it's one whole product. It's all *Battlefield*."

From what we've seen so far, even the multiplayer hardcore might find something to enjoy in *Battlefield 4*'s campaign. It's shaping up pretty well, and we can't wait to see more of the game in action, as well as hopefully hear something about any plans for next-gen. We all know it's going to happen, right? ☒





THE GAMEPLAY, THE MISSIONS, THE CHARACTERS, THE WORLD... THE LOT

Franklin is ready to jump out of a plane. Not a plane that's inside an airport hangar, which would be silly, but a plane that's thousands of feet above Earth. Which is, erm, even sillier, now

that we think about it. But Rockstar's starting point when showing us *Grand Theft Auto V* in action is clear. We can see mountains, trees, deserts, dirt, cliffs and skyscrapers piercing the horizon, a slight blue haze hugging the distant landmarks. It's an enormous world that makes you feel small, as though you're an amateur astronomer that's stumbled onto something too big to take in, trying to make sense of it all. And then Franklin falls.

It's a dramatic starting point but necessary to make the point that *GTA V* is huge. *Huge*. We're told it's easily the biggest open world Rockstar has ever made. But words are words – clearly the easiest way to prove something like this is to take a plane up to the heavens and boot one of the main characters out of a side door. Even if you were one of those *Red Dead Redemption* players who trampled all over that vast Western terrain looking for Red Sage (we feel your pain), or a *GTA IV* player who spent far too long hunting pigeons, you'll be shocked at just how big *GTA V* is. It's not empty space either, as Rockstar reassures us that this world

is also about interactivity. It's the most interactive world it has ever built. Again, just words. But at 10,000 feet in the air, we're inclined to believe them.

In the meantime, Franklin's still falling. Although we're not filled in on the exact details that has seen him end up in this unusual situation, we do learn that Franklin has fallen between both sides of the law. He thought he was doing legal work for a car dealership but that wouldn't make for a particularly exciting game ("You want the blue Fiat? Okay." Credits), so he ends up falling in with the wrong sort. Unlucky for him, lucky for us. He glides to terra firma and when Franklin

"You'll be shocked at just how big *GTA V* is. It's not empty space either, as Rockstar reassures us that this world is also about interactivity"

touches down, we can pick out some of the finer details on ground level – the dense forest, the people fishing nearby, the...

Now we're Trevor! Suddenly, without warning, Rockstar switches to Trevor using an in-game

map that's reminiscent of Google Street View. Whoosh! We're no longer in the countryside but playing as Trevor on a coastal island. The switch is almost instant, presumably powered by the same voodoo magic that Old Spice used in their adverts. Trevor is also in his pants and a bit bloody after a fight with The Lost. Interesting.

It's worth mentioning at this point that in switching to a different character, we saw a list of *San Andreas*-style stats which can be beefed up and improved. You can either improve Franklin, >

✖ The masks sort of remind us of *Army Of Two*. Except this won't be awful...





Certain missions let you customise your character before the mayhem begins.

Fun-loving criminals

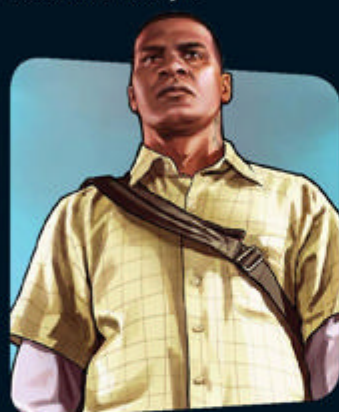


Trevor

Meet the loose cannon of the trio, a drug-addled maniac who looks and acts not unlike Lynch from *Kane & Lynch*. He has equally terrible hair, too. Still, Trevor has the best dialogue from what we've heard so far and his unpredictable nature makes him the most interesting of the three main characters. His trait is a sort of rage mode, maximising his damage output while reducing damage taken. Yeah, he crazy...

Franklin

More your traditional *GTA* protagonist, Franklin is a simple gang-banger and repo man. Based on the reactions of his friends and acquaintances, though, he doesn't seem to command a great deal of respect, which might explain why he falls in with the rest of this motley crew to pull a few big jobs. His love for cars allows him to slow down time while driving, allowing him to pull off near-impossible turns and passes.



Michael

The straight man of the group. Well, sort of – Michael is a retired bank robber who finds himself stuck in a rut and bored of his Rockford Hills lifestyle. Calculating and clearly quite smart, he's the brains of the operation, if only because the other two are impulsive and clinically insane – we'll leave it to you to work out which is which. His ability lets him slow down time in combat, *Max Payne*-style.

> Trevor and third character Michael individually or spread stat points across all three characters. They also have their own special abilities – Franklin can steer corners in slow motion, Trevor can do

“There's plenty of depth in these stat-trees without it descending into hardcore RPG territory and it's good that you can just beef up the stats of your favourite character. You can also customise the look of your character”

double damage (except in fights against The Lost, if his bloodied state is anything to go by) while Michael has a bullet-time variant available. There's plenty of depth to these stat-trees without things descending into hardcore RPG territory and it's good that you can just beef up the stats of your favourite character. You can also customise the look of your character with clothes and tattoos. Given the three wildly contrasting personalities and the individual playstyles, you'll probably have a preferred character.

Back to Trevor, and after falling out with The Lost's Western branch and getting into a scrap with them, he nips into a boat and leaves the scene of the crime. Rockstar explains how it has redone the physics of the water, and we're struggling to feign interest because physics – who cares? Just as a yawn is about to give the game away, we see Trevor's bouncing on

the seawater, crashing through the waves. This looks fun. Lots of fun. Far more fun than a boat on water should be and definitely far more fun than physics have ever been. And then the secret weapon is unleashed – scuba gear.

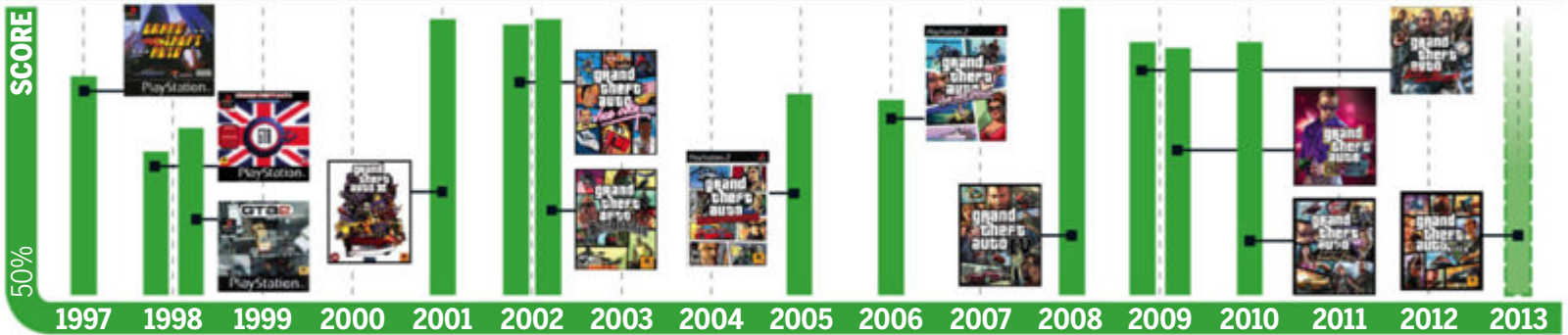
No, not the scuba gear itself, per se. Just like each plane in *GTA V* will have a parachute, most boats will have scuba gear, enabling you to zip up and dive underwater. Trevor obliges and dives into the ocean, swimming down towards the sea bed. Just like Franklin had a view of how big the world is, we can see through Trevor's eyes just how detailed the ocean is, which is dotted with ship wreckage and sunken liners, begging to be explored. Trevor's not alone either, as other divers are also poking around the ocean floor. It's an interesting variant on exploration that hasn't really been done before, and certainly not to this detail. *Far Cry 3* is the closest example that comes to mind and that's a paddling pool with armbands compared to *GTA V*'s ocean, which is teeming with life and sharks.

Hang on. Sharks. Sharks. Trevor spots the shark and makes a comedy noise into his breathing apparatus, but before we see what happens when shark teeth meet *GTA V* character, Rockstar decides to switch over to Michael. Again, this takes mere seconds, as the view whooshes over to Vinewood at night-time.

While Franklin was in a plane and Trevor was wiping the blood off his clothes, Michael is relaxing and looking out over Vinewood Boulevard, the Los Santos skyline behind him setting the scene



Living up to the legacy



perfectly. Bright lights, bars and sights like Grauman's Chinese Theater in Hollywood (well, the *GTA V* equivalent) make up the gorgeous view. He's definitely enjoying himself more than Trevor is, who's presumably trying to pick himself out from between shark teeth.

Michael walks on ahead when he bumps into Pamela Drake. She'll tell her story to anyone who'll listen. That isn't us – we want to push on ahead to Grauman's Chinese Theater, which is rich with typical *Grand Theft Auto* humour. For example, a closer look at the street performers who entertain the crowd reveal that one is dressed as a Republican Space Ranger, who has a close enough resemblance to Master Chief that Microsoft lawyers will have their nostrils flare up with fury, while the other is dressed as a hero from *GTA V*'s universe, Impotent Rage. There's also a poster nearby advertising the film 'Bitch In The Trunk'. Sounds like a family classic, that one.

Continuing the theme of visual humour is a tour bus that takes us around Vinewood's scandal hot spots. Just like Franklin had an incredible view from the sky and Trevor had an incredible view in the ocean, Michael has perhaps the most incredible view of all. Being driven around Vinewood, even from the grounded vantage point of street level, it's remarkable how dense the detail is.

Then a random mission. Film star Lacey Jones is being harassed by the press. As she chats to them, Michael has a casual conversation with her, not recognising who she is. He offers to drive her home and finds himself having to out-race the pursuing press, set to the soundtrack of *Glamorous* by Fergie. Michael gets to Lacey's house just as the sun sets. This mission, more than anything else Rockstar shows us, is a clear sign that *Grand Theft Auto V* will be a return to the lighter tone of earlier entries in the series like *Vice City* and *San Andreas*. >

> The *GTA IV* seriousness might return in the final game but based on what we've seen here, it's looking unlikely.

Michael then gets a tip from his FIB buddies (wonder what that's parodying) about an armoured car being transported. Finally, we see Michael, Trevor and Franklin team up as they decide to take it out. Regulate by Warren G plays as the trio drive to the mission. Then we see a heist mission in action and we're surprised by something we weren't expecting to see – customisation.

Not the you-can-get-clothes-and-tattoos that we mentioned earlier but the fact that you can prepare before this heist, part of Rockstar's drive to give you ownership of the missions. In this case, Franklin and Michael are wearing boiler-suits while Trevor is wearing a mask of a monkey smoking a cigarette. Better than that, you also pick a spot where you ditch your vehicle and you can plant a getaway car before the heist begins. And even better still, you can hire crew members, who will make the mission easier but also want a cut of the spoils if you're successful. And off we go, as the heist begins and the character switching mechanic takes centre point. Strap yourself in because we're only going to explain this once, and it'll be quick (we'll pretend you can't just go back and read the text again).

Michael tells Trevor to look out for the armoured car, as we switch to Trevor. He's at a highpoint looking down through some binoculars when he spots the car. Michael then drives a rubbish truck in front of the target and we switch to Franklin (in first-person!) as he blazes through an alley to



Current gen coming to a close? The views in *GTA V* are incredible.



The star system is back, showing how intense the police hunt for you is.

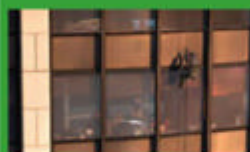


This probably isn't the best way to evade the police. Looks cool though!

Criminal minds



Heist missions begin with you deciding what equipment you want to take with you, along with any crew members you might want in tow. You can also sort getaway vehicles beforehand.



Police snipers harassing you? Another character better positioned to make a run on the target? Depending on the mission, you might want to switch viewpoints for an advantage.



Although Rockstar is keeping quiet, we suspect this heist setup will make its way into multiplayer in some form, particularly as the crew system from its previous games will be in *GTA V*.

“Rockstar is cleverly playing with the pacing. The world is stuffed with distractions and plenty to do, so it should avoid *LA Noire*'s problem of the city feeling boring and bland”

ram the side of the armoured car with a truck. The trio then meet up again and blow the back of the truck with a sticky bomb. Rockstar has obviously cherry-picked this mission for a reason, but even so, the complexity involved gives us hope that the missions in *GTA V* will be far more fun than those of *GTA IV*. It also justifies the character-switching mechanic that had some fans concerned.

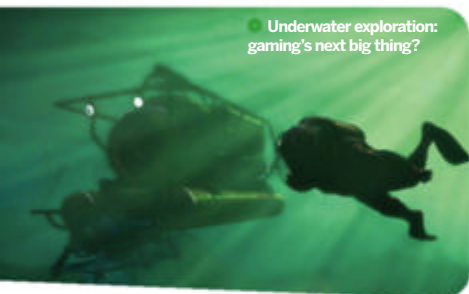
Four stars. The police are somewhat miffed with these events. Police snipers take position and we switch to Trevor, so he can take them out. This is our first real glimpse at the combat mechanics – the auto-aim that dominated *Red Dead Redemption* and *GTA IV*'s gunplay is back but it's not quite as rigid as before. The weapon wheel from *Red Dead* has also returned. That combined with the

character switching should make the combat more tactical, if the combat is designed to encourage you to use it. Hopefully *GTA V* will move away from how *GTA IV* encouraged reliance on brain-auto-aim. When the police ranks have been thinned out by prolonged gunplay, the characters split.

This is all Rockstar is prepared to show, but there's been more than enough to take in. The main thing is how the character-switching mechanic enhances the core gameplay. The world looks exactly as you'd expect from the company that published *Red Dead* and *LA Noire*, but the moment-to-moment gameplay from gun battles to exploration is really beefed up by switching between Trevor, Franklin and Michael at will.

We also get a strong sense of how Rockstar is cleverly playing with the pacing. The world is stuffed with distractions and plenty to do, so it should avoid *LA Noire*'s problem of the city feeling boring and bland. But on the other hand, the heists are well-structured, long-burn missions that go above and beyond the traditional mission structure of start at point A, go to point B, do objective C.

And the waiting game continues once more, as we're left counting down the days to September. We can't imagine a better way to see off this generation... 🍷



Underwater exploration: gaming's next big thing?



Grand Theft Auto Instant Expert

About time too

GTA V was announced in late 2011, but we had to wait ages for an eventual release date of 17 September. It's still a while away, but edging ever closer. We understand these games take a long time to make but damn it, we want it now.

Fast and furious

It wouldn't be *Grand Theft Auto* without plenty of cars and other vehicles to drive/steal, and *GTA V* promises the most yet. Cars will apparently feel less 'boatlike' than in past games, with the driving described as feeling more like a credible racing game.

Crews control

Multiplayer will feature player-created 'crews,' teaming up with friends to take the action online. Completing tasks as a crew earns experience points for the player and the same crew can exist across several Rockstar online games.

Three's a crowd

The game features three playable characters with connected stories. Retired bank robber Michael, psychotic criminal Trevor and unscrupulous repo man Franklin will find themselves getting to know each other in another classic Rockstar tale. Players can switch control between them at will.

Brand recognition

Oh hey, it's *Grand Theft Auto*. Heard of it? Of course you have, you numpty. *GTA* is huge, and rightly so, offering some of the best open-world experiences you can find in gaming and sticking intelligent, subversive stories on top. Everybody loves it, it sells loads, it's a big deal.

The City of Angels

We will be revisiting Los Santos, the Rockstar version of Los Angeles. We last saw it with *San Andreas* on PS2, but this will be a far more 'realistic,' sizable version of the city. Surrounding countryside will also be explorable, and the total map looks huge.

Switch it up

Outside of big missions, players can switch between the three characters at will, the camera zooming out to a Google Earth-style map before focusing back in on your new character. Other characters will go about their own business when not controlled.

Give 'em the finger

Characters can flip people off, something Rockstar encourages players to do as much as possible to see other people's various reactions. It's silly, irreverent stuff like this that makes us really love Rockstar, which has a real talent for mixing intelligent stories with lowbrow potty humour.

Question: Is it too late?



It's been five long years since *Grand Theft Auto IV*, and the current generation of consoles is winding down, the PlayStation 4 cresting the horizon as we all get excited for some new hardware. So is it too late in the console generation for such a huge new release? So much attention will be focused on the next generation, will people still care about a new PS3 game?



Short answer: yep. The best games in each generation tend to come out towards the end, as developers master the hardware and wring every last piece of power out of the tech that they possibly can. Games being released now look and play far better than games that came out as the PlayStation 3 launched, because developers have had years to really learn what they are doing. *Grand Theft Auto V* is bigger and better looking than *IV*, but it's still running on exactly the same hardware.



People will definitely still care. After all, this is one of the biggest videogame franchises in the world. Everyone knows about *Grand Theft Auto*, whether they love playing it or being outraged when they read about it in the *Daily Mail*. We guarantee that this is going to be the biggest yet, making millions as well as headlines across the world. Now the current gen of consoles is cheaper, the install base is larger as more people can afford one, and as such the audience for *GTA V* is even bigger than *IV*. *GTA V* should be a great send-off for the current gen of consoles, and in that regard, it's coming at just the right time.



Answer: Not in the slightest.

REVIEWS

We play games and give them a score

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Metro: Last Light

The first casualty of the apocalypse is fun



DETAILS

Publisher
4A Games
Developer
Deep Silver
Price
£39.99
Players
1
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
16
Website
enterthemetrolastlight.com
Twitter
@MetroVideoGame
Facebook
www.facebook.com/LastLight-Metro



Most gamers should already have a fair idea of what to expect after the apocalypse. Between classics like *Fallout* and *Beneath A Steel Sky* and newer games such as *Rage* and *Resistance*, we've all come to know the drill – barren plains of bleached wasteland, deserted buildings and isolated shelters where the few survivors do their best to stay alive. It's all pretty grim.

Metro: Last Light isn't going to win any awards for bucking trends. Twenty-one years ago, nuclear war wiped out most of humanity, rendering the surface a hostile land riddled with radiation and deadly to the few who remained. The only choice for the survivors of Moscow was to retreat into the Metro system, away from the poisonous air that lingered outside.

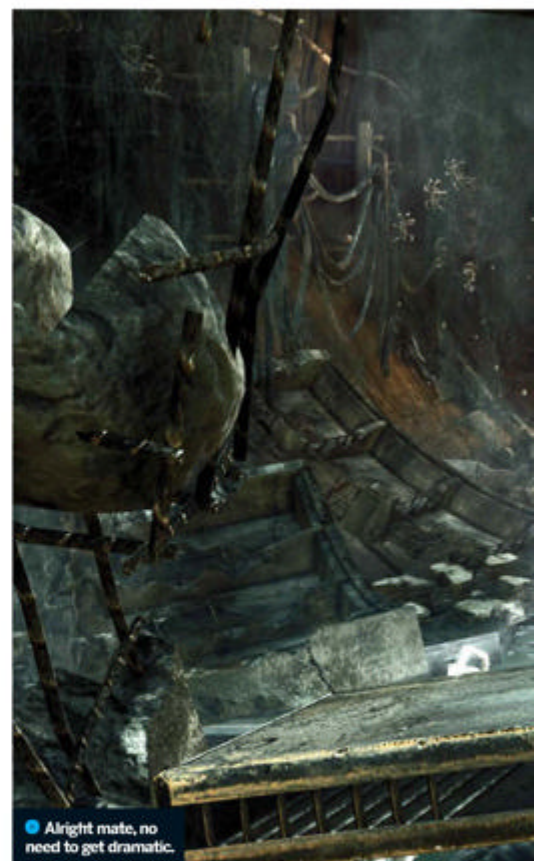
Based on the series of books by Russian author Dmitry Glukhovsky, *Metro* seems to be playing a tune that we've all heard plenty of times before. In some ways it manages to switch up the genre conventions and give us something new, while in others it falls into the same old traps.

Players control Artyom, the hero of the first game, who is essentially a cipher for the player, showing little to no personality of his own and only speaking in cutscenes. A year has passed since *Metro 2033*, but the events of the last game are only briefly touched on and never broadly explained for those who missed them. It's a shame, as key plot points and certain characters rely on knowledge of the first game, but it's hard to criticise a sequel too much for requiring prior knowledge.

What can be criticized is the game doing very little to make the plot comprehensible. Lots of things happen, but it's never quite clear why, who is involved or what exactly is occurring. Nondescript character models don't help in telling apart the numerous supporting faces and a bunch of similar place names make it hard to figure out what is happening where. It probably makes perfect sense to fans of the books, but we would have appreciated a little more in terms of basic explanation.

Where *Metro* excels is atmosphere. It might be a well-worn setting, but *Last Light* does a great job of making the post-apocalypse feel harshly real. Underground communities are dirty, dimly lit and chaotic, too many people in too small a space. It's easy to see how the game benefits from having a wealth of source material to draw on. Little details create a believable world that feels like it could exist. Underground pig pens, grizzled old men drinking vodka in a corner, dingy brothels and a pervading sense of claustrophobia become a post-apocalypse that feels lived-in and utterly believable. The life these people are living is a miserable one, but you can see their determination to hang on regardless.

When the player leaves 'civilisation' and enters into the dark, twisted tunnels of the Moscow Metro is when the game really kicks off. It's not all action, and long sections will go by with just the rats and shadows for company. Unfortunately, for a good chunk of the game, you do have company –

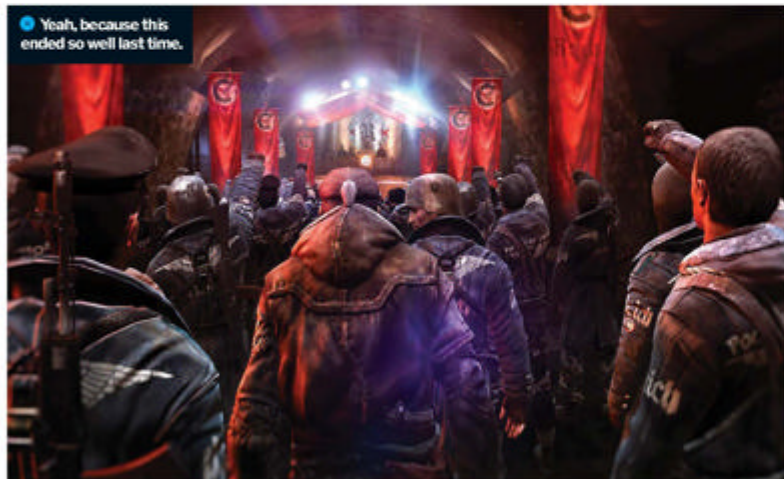


• Alright mate, no need to get dramatic.

Artyom will regularly be joined by an NPC ally. Annoyingly, at this point *Metro* tends to become the standard follow-the-guy game that *Call Of Duty* invented and other titles ruined. Seriously, can we not kick down a door ourselves? There is a lot of waiting for your AI companion to stroll to the exit so they can let you out, and it gets very tedious, very quickly. *Last Light* isn't a particularly long game anyway, and without waiting for your pals to get a bloody move on you could easily chop another hour off it.

The game is never more atmospheric than when Artyom ventures out from the tunnels and onto the surface. Eternally grey skies clogged with poisonous ash spill corrosive rain, destroyed buildings and empty streets stretching out in every direction. It's beautiful in a very dark way, although if you are tired of

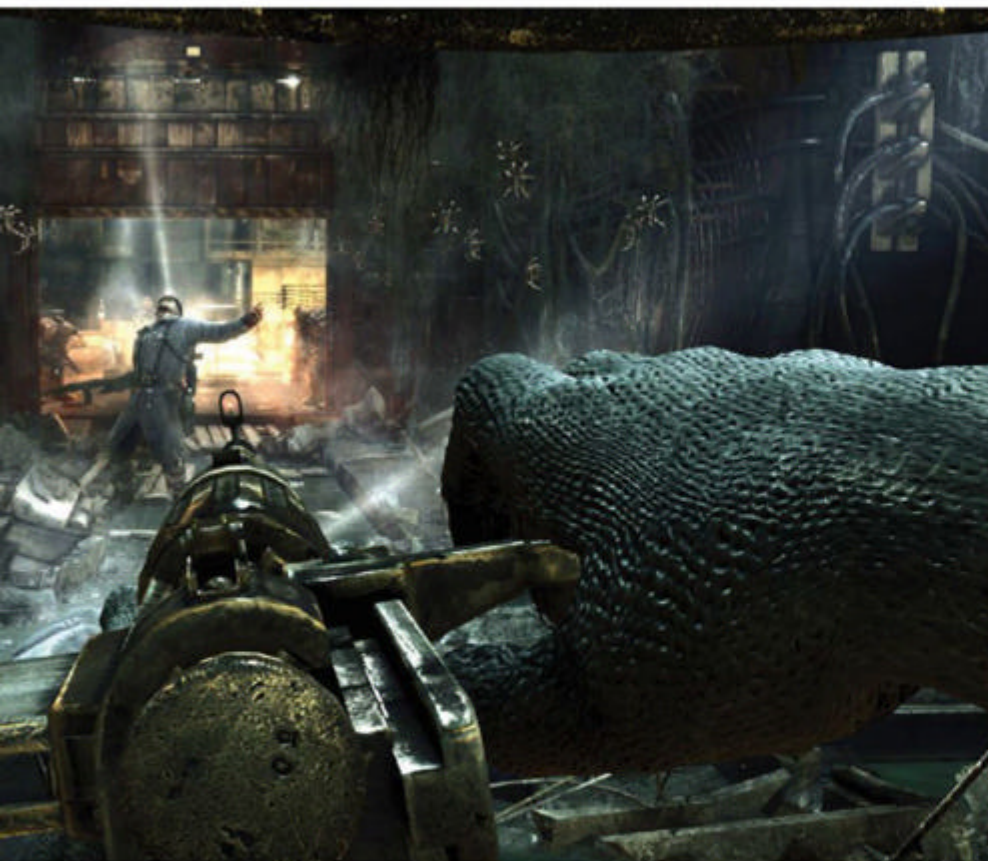
The game is never more atmospheric than when Artyom ventures out from the tunnels and onto the surface



• Yeah, because this ended so well last time.



• Reminds us of our uni halls.



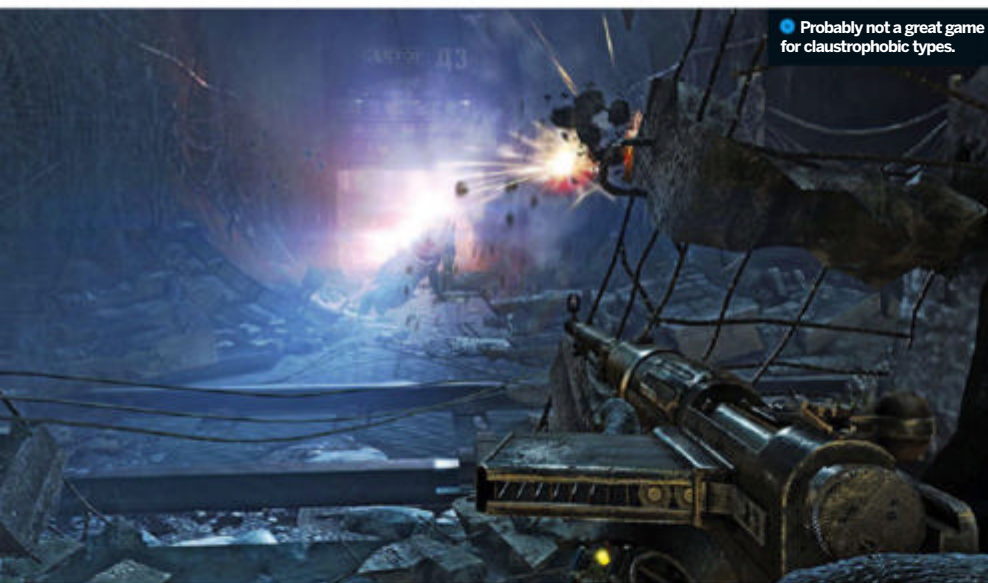
It's like a beautiful, irradiated Christmas.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Artyom has more at his disposal than just guns

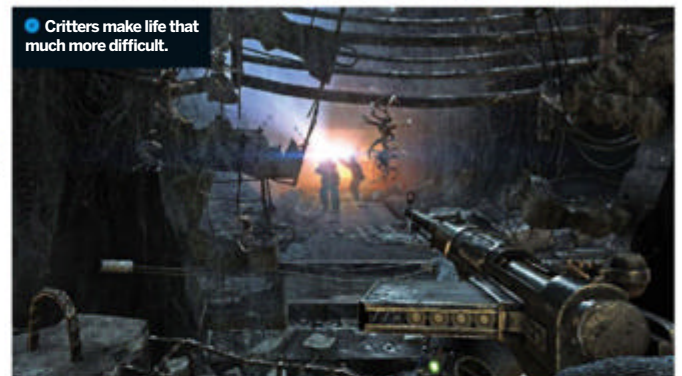
LAST LIGHT IS great at creating a convincing world, and it's the little details that really cement this. A good example is some of Artyom's gear. A flashlight is an absolute necessity when living in the Metro, but power quickly runs down and the light dims. The solution is whipping out your handy portable charger and giving it a few quick cranks to recharge your torch. It barely takes any time at all, yet goes a great way in creating a convincing setting. Other little touches like manually pumping up pneumatic weapons make you realize how run-down this world is.



Probably not a great game for claustrophobic types.



Critters make life that much more difficult.



Who wants to bet that this thing is hostile?



grey concrete in games, this might be a bit of an overload. Still, trips outdoors are a real thrill and that's thanks largely to the best feature of the game – the gas mask.

Journeys outside or into other irradiated areas require Artyom to wear a gas mask, giving everything a claustrophobic air as you begin to hear your own breathing and condensation builds up on the inside of the visor. In a genius touch, blood, mud, rain or other fluids can splatter on the mask and obscure your vision, requiring a quick tap of L2 to wipe it clean. It's a tiny feature but one that helps enormously in immersing the player and making them feel like they truly inhabit this terrible world.

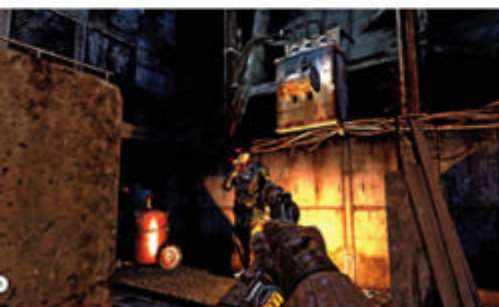
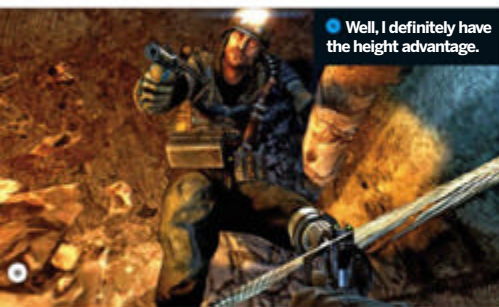
The mask uses filters that quickly run out and must be replaced every few minutes before Artyom suffocates. It might sound annoying but it's another great example of how incremental details can create a believable world. Pay attention to your surroundings and you are

never likely to run out of air, so it never becomes irritating. Taking hits in combat can crack your mask, not only leading to breaks in the screen but also your air running out at a faster rate. Finding a fresh mask to swap for your broken, rapidly leaking one is always a relief.

Roaming the grey wilds of Moscow brings to mind *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.*, another Russian post-apocalyptic game. They might look similar, but structurally they couldn't be more different. *S.T.A.L.K.E.R.* championed the open-world, sandbox approach, leaving the player to their own devices to make their way in a destroyed Chernobyl. *Last Light* is the complete opposite, with a single-minded, linear approach. Players are driven from one area to the next in a relentless manner, with little time to smell the metaphorical roses even when taking it easy in a settlement. It's a corridor shooter in every sense of the word, considering the vast majority of it takes place in linear tunnels.



REVIEW



GOING UNDERGROUND

To predict the future, look to the past

THE WORLD OF *Metro* is a deeply divided one. Humanity might have been reduced to a few meager scraps by the nuclear apocalypse, but rather than banding together as might be logical, the remaining survivors have instead grouped up and declared war on one another. Oh mankind, why you got to be so silly?

The main conflict is between the fascist, neo-Nazi 'Reich' and the Communist 'Reds'. Neither side is painted in a good light, both doing terrible things to further their goals. Reich soldiers regularly execute people for having a wrong-shaped skull in an extreme form of ethnic cleansing, while the Reds don't blink at poisoning an entire settlement in secret so they can "save the day" to win public favour.

Caught in the middle are a number of neutral settlements that simply want to eke out an existence without getting killed. Unfortunately for them, both Reich and the Reds adopt a 'with us or against us' policy, so fighting happens often. Artyom belongs to a neutral police force of sorts called the Rangers, who attempt to protect the innocents while staying out of the way of the ongoing war. Needless to say, it doesn't always go that smoothly...

> Not that there is anything wrong with a linear shooter – games like *Half-Life 2* have proven it's a perfectly viable take on the genre. The problem with *Metro: Last Light* is that, despite going all over the place, the plot still never feels like it actually has a point.

Part of this is due to it being utterly incomprehensible, but it mainly comes down to the fact that, when it comes down to the shooting in this first person *shooter*, it's just a bit boring. A rather serious flaw.

Artyom has a small selection of guns to choose from, all genre staples like shotguns, pistols and sniper rifles. Customisation options offer some extra scope, pun intended; guns can be fitted with silencers, extended barrels, laser sights, stocks and numerous other add-ons. It's a neat touch, but isn't extensive enough to really change how any of the guns feel.

Players will find themselves fighting the armies of opposing factions as well as mutated monsters, products of prolonged exposure

Standard shooting is exactly that, and feels so uninspired and lifeless that it can be hard to stay interested

to the radiation that ended the world. It isn't particularly scientifically accurate. There are a number of different types of monsters but muddy textures and confused art design can make it hard to tell them apart, not that it matters. All these big scary bastards do is run at you and try to eat your face off. Some of them have wings and some of them live underwater, but otherwise they all follow the same basic hairy dog-thing monster archetype.

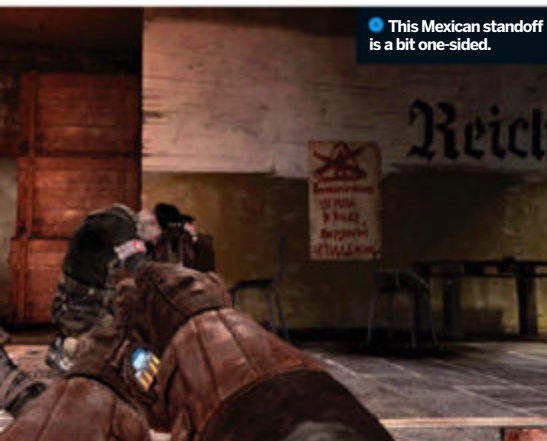
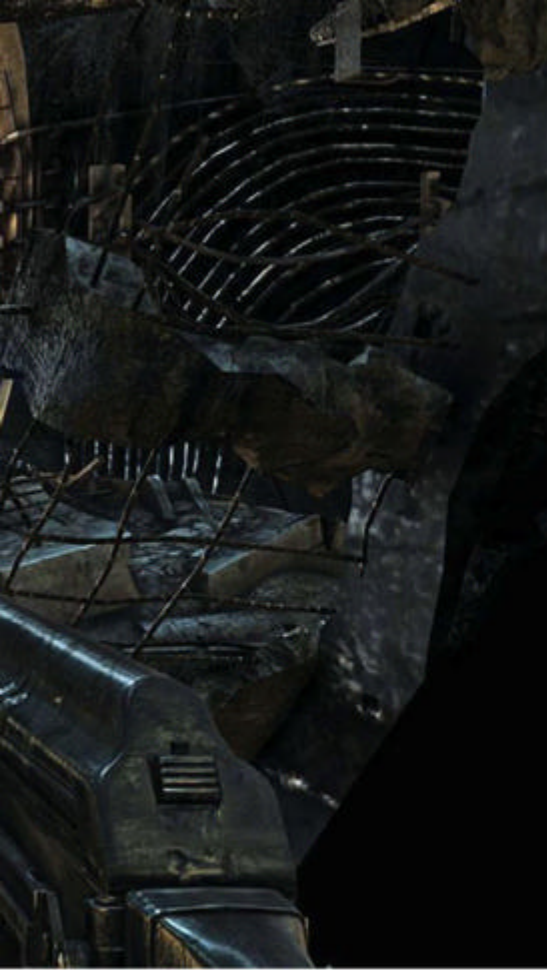
It's a lot more fun to fight other people, thanks largely to some decent stealth mechanics. Stick to the shadows and Artyom is much harder to spot. It can get a bit silly when enemy soldiers can't see you standing two feet in front of them, but then this is a game featuring enormous mutant lobsters. Arguably, that's no justification for bad mechanics, though.

Previously...
in Play



Issue 221

"We have the likes of *BioShock* and *Deus Ex*, but we also have *Metro 2033*, a strong outing in the genre that flew under the radar on console because... we're not sure why."



Moving slowly through the shadows, turning off lights as you go, before sneaking up behind an enemy and offing him with a one-hit stealth kill is an endlessly satisfying experience. Entering a new area, planning out your method of attack and carefully moving from foe to foe is great fun and the most thrilling part of *Metro*.

Sometimes you'll be spotted and sometimes stealth just isn't an option, and it's here the action falls apart. Standard shooting is exactly that, and feels so uninspired and lifeless that it can be hard to stay interested. It's perfectly functional and everything works as you'd expect, but that's it. A lack of enemy reaction makes guns feel weightless and events never escalate into hugely epic gunfights, shootouts ending before you really get into the swing of it.

Indeed, the whole game feels like it should be building up to a red-hot climax but instead plods on at a room-temperature level of excitement. You keep expecting things to really kick off but they never seem to. The action does ratchet up briefly at the end, but it's short-lived. Not that a mellow, considered game is bad, but the

mood has to be achieved without things getting boring, a feat *Last Light* doesn't quite manage.

Metro: Last Light attempts a lot, and there are a few things it excels at. In creating a playable vision of a popular fictional world, players will be treated to one of the most atmospheric, well-realised virtual habitats in games for a long while. Unfortunately the actual gameplay isn't saying much, and all the beautiful scenery in the world isn't enough to cover for boring action. There's a lot of potential here, and fans of the books will be sure to enjoy themselves. For everyone else, it's a bit harder to recommend.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

Wonderfully realised, atmospheric environments and uninspired, slightly dull shooting combine to create a game just above average. We'd love to see more from this harsh future setting, but maybe it could be a bit more fun next time.

60%

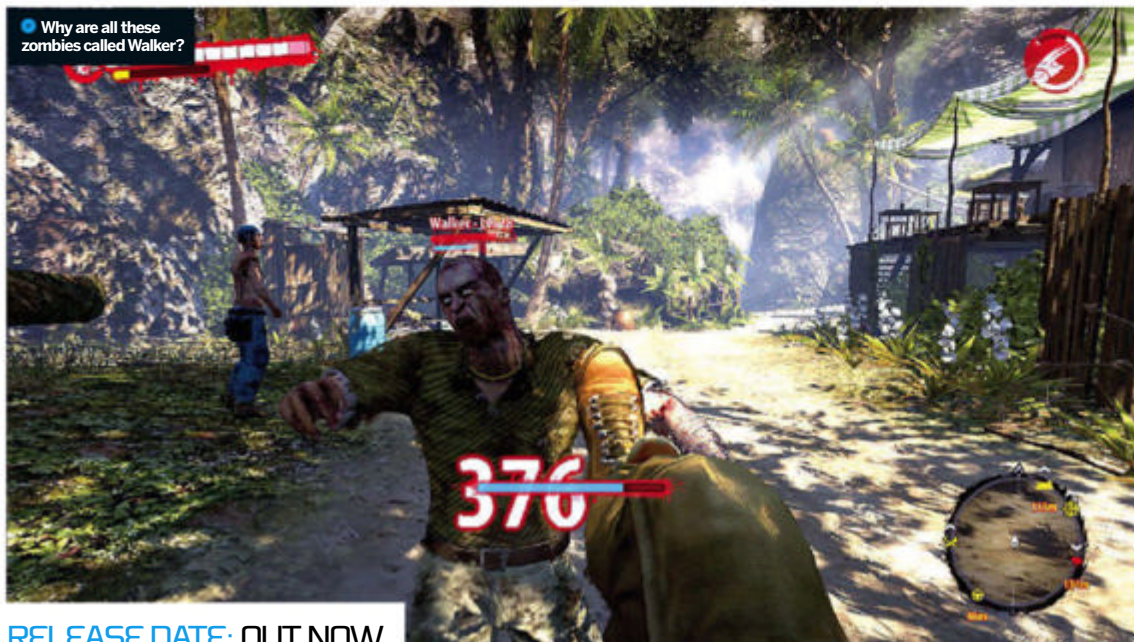
Good thing Artyom writes these useful reminders to himself.



REVIEW



What could a zombie want with a paddle anyway?



Why are all these zombies called Walker?

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Dead Island: Riptide

Night of the terrible Australian accents



DETAILS

Publisher
Deep Silver
Developer
Techland
Price
£39.99
Players
1-4
Genre
RPG
Age Rating
18
Website
deadisland.
deepsilver.com
Twitter
@Techland
Facebook
facebook.com/
deadisland
riptidegame



Dead Island was a game about zombies on an island. Surprise! The heart-rending CG trailer turned out to be total guff and we were presented with a schlocky, ultra violent and flawed co-op romp through an infested paradise. It had massive issues, but was really fun in a B-movie, over-the-top kind of way, and was a real blast when playing with friends.

Dead Island: Riptide is the same. Seriously, it's exactly the same. This is ostensibly a sequel, but it feels more like a glorified expansion pack. Whether that's a good thing or not depends on how much you enjoyed the original.

For the uninitiated, it might look like an FPS but *Riptide* is actually an RPG similar to *Skyrim* or *Fallout*. Sure, there's plenty of zombie decapitation, but there are also stats, levelling, talent specialisation, quests, weapon crafting, and numbers and health bars all over the place.

Although guns can be found, they are rare and as such combat focuses on brutal melee face-smashing. Weapons fall into two broad categories of blunt and bladed, one breaking bones and the other lopping off limbs. Different weapons are found regularly, useful since they degrade quickly with use. Weapons and

items have differing qualities indicated by the colour of their text, a system similar to that used in many MMOs. Indeed, *Dead Island: Riptide* is essentially a single-player/co-op MMORPG.

If this all sounds like the first game, it's with good reason. Gameplay-wise, *Riptide* is almost identical to its predecessor. There are a few new vehicles, including boats, which happen to handle much like all the other cars. A weather system causes it to randomly start raining every now and then, and a gimmicky base-defence mechanic has you doing quests to upgrade your barricades, but otherwise you've seen this all before.

The four old characters from the first game return, including everyone's favourite Sam B, with one new survivor introduced: Australian ex-soldier John. Character choice isn't just cosmetic, as each has different strengths and special abilities that affect how they play. This is most apparent in co-op play, where traditional MMO archetypes take more hold – Sam B becomes the tank, drawing the focus of the zombies, while Xian Mei fulfills the DPS role as she dances around, chopping limbs

This is ostensibly a sequel, but it feels more like a glorified expansion pack

all over the place. Each character is viable in a single-player game, and the specialisations are never so extreme that you can't choose whoever you like the look of most.

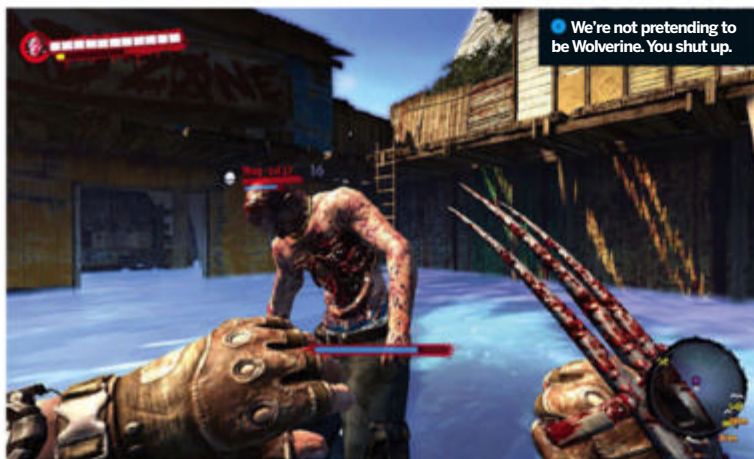
The plot picks up almost immediately after the ending of the first game. Our four survivors have escaped Banoi on a helicopter, but anyone who has watched a zombie film in their time knows that helicopter rides never end well. The four meet fellow immune survivor John, and the new group of five quickly find themselves stranded on another island, also full of nasty zombies. It's a bare-bones story with nothing much to it, but nobody is going to play *Riptide* for the plot. The main characters are ridiculous stereotypes and the NPCs are forgettable and unimportant. No, the reason people play *Dead Island* is simple – cracking open zombie skulls with their pals.

This is a violent game, and it more than warrants the 18 rating. Zombies get beaten, broken, chopped into bits and burnt to a crisp. Bladed weapons can sever limbs while blunt



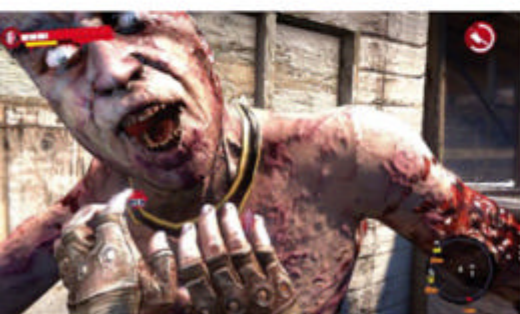
Block! Building kick! EXPLOSION!





ones can shatter bones, both decreasing your foes offensive potential and looking properly cool. Smack a walker in the face with a meat tenderizer and enjoy their melon exploding into bloody giblets. It's brutally satisfying in a way we are slightly ashamed to admit.

Riptide evokes MMOs in another way in that it quickly becomes a grind-heavy succession of fetch quests. Bashing zombie skulls in should always be fun, but without much reason to do so things can get a bit dull. Thankfully, it also copies MMOs in a good way – it's way more fun with friends. Group up with some mates, ramp up the difficulty and the game becomes a sort-of RPG *Left 4 Dead*, you and pals struggling



to survive against waves of angry dead dudes. Sure, everything feels a bit cheap and, to quote Shakespeare, janky as all hell, but in an endearing, low budget kind of way. There are bugs all over the place and NPC models are seriously ugly, but when you are swinging a baseball bat wrapped in barbed wire, back-to-back with your friends, you won't really mind. Still, a bit of polish never hurts, guys.

One character, some boats and a bit of rain make this feel like *Dead Island 1.5* rather than a full sequel, and it's hard to recommend unless you really loved the first and want more to play with your mates. Alone it's a grind and technically it's sub-par, but there is some simple fun to be had on this particular island. **Sam Smith**

VERDICT

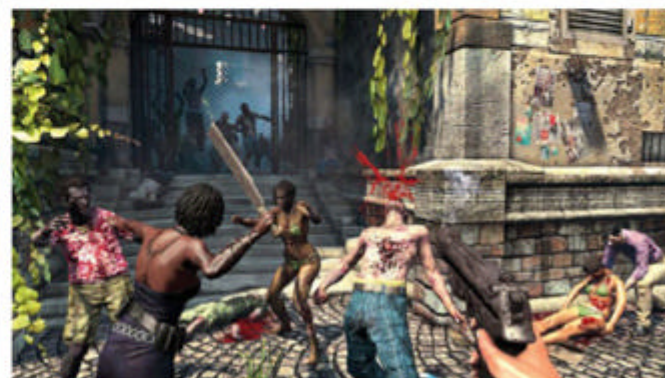
The same slightly wonky fun we had in the first one, and we mean the exact damn same. It's not a bad game, but there is little reason to play *Riptide* when you can pick up the original for a reduced price. One for dedicated zombie fans only.

65%

In this series

Dead Island Issue 210
The same as this, but it was original at the time. **79%**

Dead Island: Riptide



ONLINE MODE RATED

Bonding over a bloody mound of corpses

DEAD ISLAND EXISTS for multiplayer, and if you ain't playing *Riptide* co-operatively online, you are basically doing it wrong. Luckily, Deep Silver makes it nice and easy to jump into a game, be it with friends or strangers, and get down to the lovely carnage. Games can be set to be joined at any time by either your friends or the internet at large, and it never takes long for some backup to find their way into your world. Dropping out is equally smooth as the game keeps running for the host. It's all basic stuff, but in a game that revolves around co-op, making sure it works is all you need. ★★★★★



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel

A contender for most mediocre game ever made



So, here we go. 800 words to analyse and critique a game about which there's really very little to say.

Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel is the very embodiment of mediocrity: a B-grade middle-of-the-road shooter that does nothing at all to make itself stand out from the crowd. It's so enormously risk-averse that once you're done playing you're left drawing a blank; any kind of commentary replaced by a hollow pit of apathy. *The Devil's Cartel* isn't good. It isn't bad. It's pedestrian game-making taken to the extreme.

The Devil's Cartel could almost be read as some kind of satirical statement on the characterless nature of contemporary shooters, were it not for the fact that it's played so straight. *Army Of Two*'s usual terrible twosome of Rios and Salem has now been replaced by two meatheads with even less personality – the unimaginatively named 'Alpha' and 'Bravo'.

Donned in the series' last fragment of originality – its customised hockey masks – Alpha and Bravo face off against a group of ruthless Mexican drug runners led by the brutal Bautista. As this is an *Army Of Two* game you likely won't be expecting powerful treatise on the folly of war, but nevertheless this is still as ignorable a narrative as they come, despite its somewhat confusing

attempts to shake things up around the half way mark.

You'll spend less time following the narrative than you will being irritated by the butch machismo delivered throughout – the kind spewed out by any man-child who believes this kind of swagger and attitude still has a valued place in videogames. Alpha and Bravo are the kind of protagonists who brutally knife unaware foes to death before fist-bumping to celebrate the achievement. We wish there was a hint of irony to be found in there to assuage the embarrassment, but it's not to be found.

The pair cut through hordes of constantly flooding enemies in environments that sometimes tease the possibility of being interesting – an airplane graveyard, the Day of the Dead festival in Mexico – but never elevate above standard shooter fare. There's nothing here that will surprise you. You enter a range of clichéd videogame environments, take cover and shoot anything that's shooting at you, move on, rinse and repeat over the course of seven hours. Yes, you get behind mounted turrets, protect allies from behind the safety of a sniper scope and speed through the streets on the back of a flatbed truck destroying anything in sight, but even these more action-packed moments are forgotten as soon as they're experienced. You've played them a hundred times before in a hundred different games.

You would think that, like the games that have preceded it, *The Devil's Cartel*'s saving grace – its very raison d'être, in fact – would be its co-op, but even here it manages to strip back away the series' previous successes. This time there are no back-to-back takedowns, no mock surrenders and no tagging and sniping. You move, you shoot, and that's that.

There is a point system that rewards for working with your partner – a basic kill will earn you \$10 in the game's monetary XP system, for instance, while a dual partner takedown nets somewhere in the range of \$75.



DETAILS

Publisher
Electronic Arts
Developer
Visceral Games
Price
£44.99
Players
1-2
Genre
Third-person shooter
Age Rating
18
Website
www.armyoftwo.com
Twitter
@ArmyOfTwo
Facebook
facebook.com/armyoftwo
thedeveloperscartel



"So who's going to pay me \$10 to kill this guy? Yeah! War!"

Or you could try



Dead Space 3 Issue 228
An example of Visceral Games doing something actually worthwhile with co-op. **70%**



• The cover system is sticky and not as well implemented as it could and should be.

Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel

• Some moments force you to play as a tactical team, but they're few and far between.



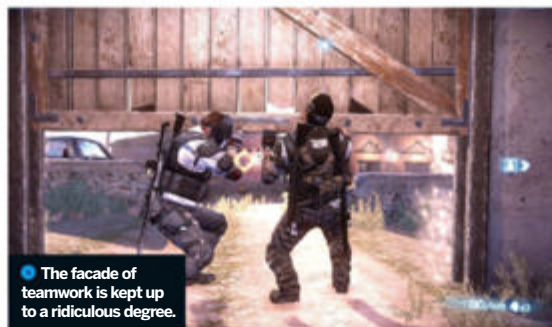
• The game feels like an obligation, rather than something created out of genuine love for the material.



THE DEVIL WEARS PRADA

Changing your barrel attachment is as effective as changing your clothes

AS IN THE previous games, *Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel* features customisation for both your character's appearance and weaponry. Players can spend their in-game cash on new outfits for their character or create their own personalised masks, while the armoury presents a raft of customisation options for the separate weapon classes. However, the variety of attachments feel more like filler than considered inclusions, with each having little modifying effect on gameplay. Most players will likely find a specific weapon loadout that suits them early on and stick with it, ignoring the unremarkable alternatives offered in the rest of the arsenal later on.



• The facade of teamwork is kept up to a ridiculous degree.



• These guys are the blandest two protagonists we've seen in a long time.

You can also 'surprise' enemies, take them down with environmental kills, or distract them so your partner can flank, all of which reward with varying levels of generosity.

Yet this all feels like it's occurring in the background rather than dictating the flow of play. The rewards are more often than not doled out for happenstance, rather than as a result of you going out of your way to achieve them. The game simply doesn't bother to support co-op play on such a level of depth.

Mechanically, too, *The Devil's Cartel* co-op fails. The game insists on taking you back to the start of a level when another player joins your game, and if they leave, you're kicked out as well. It's an incredibly clunky approach to what should be this game's core feature. Even titles that have co-op thrown in as an afterthought better integrate the experience than this.

If there's any hope for redemption at all, it's in the introduction of the Frostbite 2 engine. Destruction now means cover can splinter and fracture during firefights, forcing the player to stay on the move rather than simply hunker down in one spot. It also plays into what is the game's most exciting feature: killing enemies fills an Overkill gauge, which upon activation will endow players with invincibility and infinite ammunition for a short period of time.

Anything you shoot at during this green-tinted moment of empowerment will shatter in an exciting display of debris, the environment torn asunder under the slow-motion chugging of an assault rifle. When Overkill is activated, *The Devil's Cartel* almost manages to feel something more than mediocre, playing on its own silliness rather than posturing as a serious dramatic experience. If only the game could have made more of this across its laborious seven hour running time.

As it stands, *Army Of Two: The Devil's Cartel* is certainly functional, but that's about as much as we can say for it. It's the videogame equivalent of eating an ungarnished slice of white bread. It'll do the job it's intended for, but if you're looking for any flavour, excitement or creativity, you're better off looking elsewhere.

Chris McMahon

VERDICT

A humdrum shooter that runs on unabashed machismo and is completely devoid of imagination. At a time when gaming is offering experiences like *Journey* and *The Last Of Us*, run-of-the-mill, mid-Noughties era shooters such as this feel more lacklustre than ever.

44%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Injustice: Gods Among Us

NetherRealm goes from Sub-Zero to heroes



DETAILS

Publisher
Warner Bros
Developer
NetherRealm Studios
Price
£39.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Fighting
Age Rating
16
Website
www.injustice.com
Twitter
@InjusticeGame
Facebook
facebook.com/
InjusticeGame

PS3 Who would win in a fight – Batman or Superman? Green Lantern or The Flash? Wonder Woman or Sinestro? Get any bunch of comic book fans together and the conversation will inevitably move on to these fantasy match-ups, pitting beloved characters against each other to finally decide who is the strongest.

That's *Injustice* in a nutshell. Developed by NetherRealm, the studio behind 2011's *Mortal Kombat* reboot, *Injustice* pits 24 heroes and villains from the DC Comics universe against each other in traditional fighting game style. Finding out who would beat who suddenly got a lot simpler.

Gameplay is similar to *Mortal Kombat*, with a few minor changes. Characters can perform light, medium and heavy attacks, stringing certain moves together with specific button combinations or performing special moves with combinations of directional inputs and attacks. Anyone who has played a fighting game before will feel right at home.

Fighting builds up meter that can be used to enhance special moves or perform a cinematic super attack. Some of these are jaw-droppingly over the top, like Superman punching his enemy into space or Doomsday slamming his opponent *through the centre*

Aside from a few minor new mechanics, *Injustice* feels a lot like *Mortal Kombat*



of the Earth. Each character only has one though, so they can get tiresome quickly.

The numerous interactive elements in the stages are an interesting touch, though. Players can throw explosive barrels, kick their opponents through panes of glass, run them over with motorbikes and do all kinds of other slapstick stuff. The problem with these environmental attacks is that they are entirely unblockable and can often lead to huge combos, making them feel a tad broken. They can be turned off, an option we are grateful for and one we anticipate might become the tournament standard.

Aside from a few minor new mechanics like push-blocking and an awful "Clash" move that thankfully isn't very useful, *Injustice* feels a lot like *Mortal Kombat*. It retains the slightly jerky, off-putting animation style and weird, floaty jump arcs, big juggle combos and a rubber sheen making all the characters look like action figures. It never seems to flow quite as well as Japanese fighters like *Street Fighter*, *Marvel vs Capcom* or *BlazBlue*.

That's not to say it's bad, and gameplay feels a lot smoother than *Mortal Kombat*. Everything has been refined and tightened and the result is the best, most credible fighting game that NetherRealm has made yet. Of course, a large part of the audience doesn't give a crap about fighting game intricacies and are far more interested in the cast. *Mortal Kombat* won praise for its cinematic story mode and *Injustice* follows suit with an epic tale told via cutscenes, interspersed with fights.

The game takes place in an alternate universe where Lois Lane has been killed and Metropolis destroyed thanks to the machinations of the Joker. Superman snaps, killing the Joker and establishing a new world order with himself as the dictator. Crime is destroyed through fear and other superheroes either join the regime willingly or are hunted down and forced to.

The game begins with the heroes from the "regular" DC universe being pulled into this one by resistance leader Batman to help

him bring down Superman once and for all. It's a fascinating premise and does a great job of explaining why these supposed friends are now pounding the paste out of each other. The story is told in an epic, blockbuster style and some great voice actors, including Kevin Conroy (the one true Batman), make it sound wonderful. In a genre often maligned for poor story, NetherRealm has done a fantastic job of merging a great plot with classic fighting gameplay. It only takes a few hours to get through but while it lasts, it's absolutely excellent.

And there's plenty of other single-player content to keep you occupied. Battle mode is a spin on the regular arcade mode with various modifiers and S.T.A.R. Labs is a huge challenge mode with ten stages for each character that will eat up a lot of time. Players level up and constantly unlock new stuff, which is great for compulsive types.

Ultimately, fighting games live or die on their multiplayer, and nowadays that amounts to the strength of online play. *Injustice* has the regular swathe of options, with Ranked and Player matches as well as more original modes like King Of The Hill, where spectators can bet on the match as they wait their turn. It all seems to work well, although only time will tell how solid the netcode is when playing a variety of people.

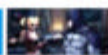
Injustice is a wonderful treat for comic book fans and a pretty decent fighting game to boot. There's enough single-player content to last for weeks and the online is solid and great fun. So yeah, pretty super.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

A decent fighting game and a great love letter to the DC universe that comic fans will absolutely adore. It's NetherRealm's best game yet and full of single-player and online content to keep players entertained for ages. Just do the world a massive favour and don't pick Deathstroke. Thanks.

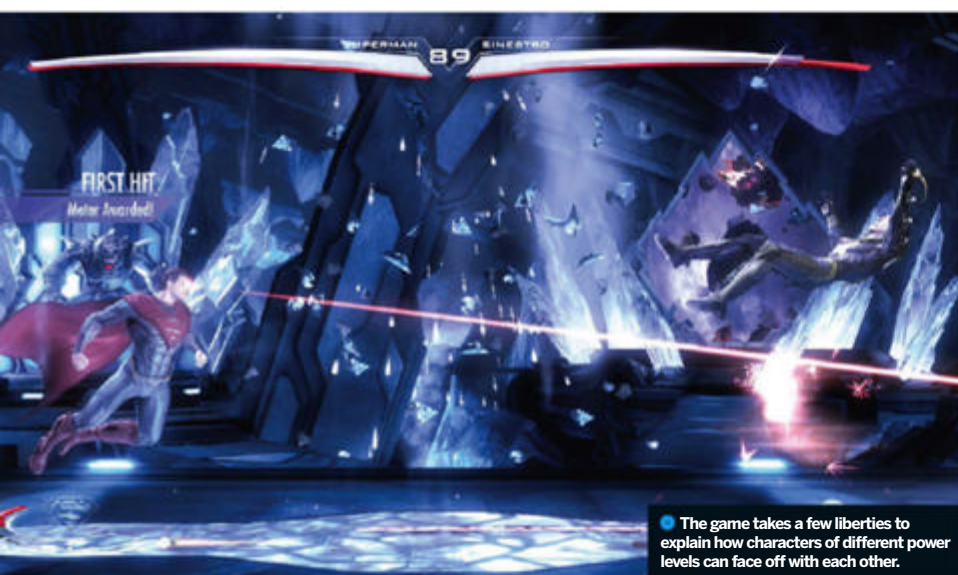
80%





▶ Injustice: Gods Among Us

• Nightwing: pick him if you have no interest in having other players respect you.



• The game takes a few liberties to explain how characters of different power levels can face off with each other.



• Grundy's best combos rip through most of a life bar.



• What a... shocking... outcome... sigh. Sorry.



ONLINE MODE RATED

Fightin' round the world

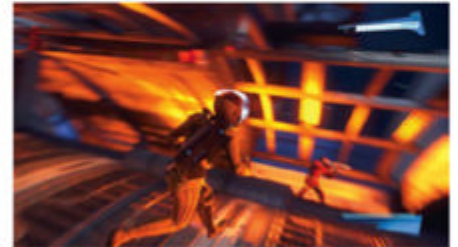
FANS OF MORTAL Kombat should know what to expect from *Injustice's* online options. Along the regular ranked, player and private matches is the king of the hill lobby mode, where players can win XP by betting on the match they are watching as they wait their turn. It's a neat little spin on the formula that keeps things a bit more fresh. Netcode seems solid enough, although it's not as smooth as *BlazBlue* or *3rd Strike Online Edition*. Just make sure that, if you do play online, you don't use Deathstroke – a good 50 per cent of net battlers seem to pick the grizzled mercenary. ★★★★★





RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Teamwork! This is about the extent of the co-operation in *Star Trek*, though it still makes for some tense moments.



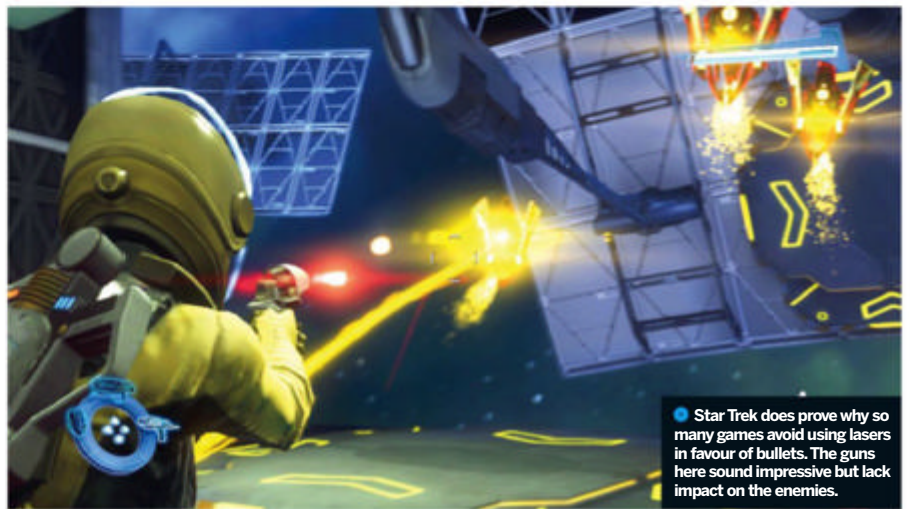
Star Trek



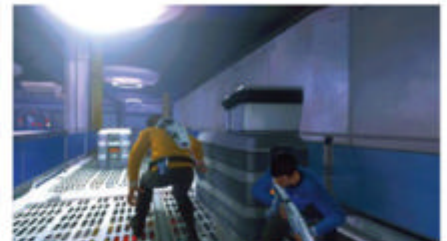
Boldly going where every game has gone before

Yes, it's a licensed game, but no, it's actually *not* terrible. While we try and pick ourselves up off the floor from this staggering realisation, you're probably wondering what *Star Trek: The Video Game* does that all the other awful licensed dross we've played over the years doesn't and the answer, surprisingly, is not a lot. There's practically nothing special about *Star Trek* other than the fact that it's not a complete chore to play like we expected, but it still manages to be a reasonable amount of fun, just as long as you're willing to put up with a few rough edges.

In fact, at times, it can really be quite a lot of fun, especially with a friend, though that's if you ignore the often irritating bugs you'll encounter. It's really rather surprising; the cover shooting is by the numbers, the platforming is glitchy and though on first appearances it seems to be visually doing alright for itself, the lens flare overcompensates for what is generally a flat and ugly game. The facial features of the main



Star Trek does prove why so many games avoid using lasers in favour of bullets. The guns here sound impressive but lack impact on the enemies.



cast, with all those Hollywood smiles, come across like mannequins and even the main enemy threat, the Gorn, look like rejects from other, better games. It shouldn't work, and yet it still manages to surprise us with uninspired shooting that's still fun and the odd co-op setpiece that's genuinely enjoyable.

And it's all tied into the new *Star Trek* film, which means the voice acting's top-notch and the sound design is incredible. Even the story manages to feel like a natural part of the new *Star Trek* universe, despite the Gorn looking like Velociraptors with guns. Kirk and Spock spend the entire game running from room to room, shooting space dinosaurs, hacking terminals, prying open doors together and occasionally engaging in the odd puzzle. There's the pretence of cooperation but in reality nothing is explored in any meaningful way. But it doesn't really matter.

Just like an episode of the show, it's fun enough while it lasts and with a buddy by your

side there's still some enjoyment to be had, though the game admittedly gets less fun if you play it on your own. Bugs, graphical glitches and some rubbish partner AI drag things down and some ill-advised checkpointing doesn't make the process any easier, but play *Star Trek* with a friend and it acts as an interesting lead-in to the movie. It would be easy to ignore *Star Trek: The Videogame*, but really, we should applaud the fact that, in some small way, this isn't as bad as it could have been.

David Lynch

VERDICT

Despite a few issues *Star Trek: The Video Game* turns out to be a surprising amount of fun. It might not break the mould in any conceivable way, but there's enough here for two players to come together and fight some space dinosaurs and have a fair time.

52%



Kirk is just as annoying as he is in the film/TV show. At least there's not a seduction mini-game.

Or you could try



Mass Effect 2 Issue 201. Why the hell are you reading this when you should be playing *Mass Effect 2* instead? GO GO GO. 97%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Defiance

I equip Epic Gun Of Shooting +1

Guns! Shooting! Brown!



PS3

Defiance describes itself as a "transmedia" experience, tying in to a new show on Syfy set in the same future world. Events in the show will affect the game and vice versa, developer Trion promising to "break new ground" with this new take on an MMO. It's a brave approach, but it ultimately seems to be a little too ambitious.

It's an MMO, but not an RPG. Rather, Defiance is a third-person shooter, although with role-playing tropes like upgradeable gear and skills. Players create an "ark hunter", essentially a mercenary, and are thrown into a vaguely post-apocalyptic world where nothing much is explained and extensive knowledge of the show is assumed.

Forty-odd years ago, alien refugees fled to Earth and, obviously, war promptly broke out. The two races have since found peace and made up but various other dangers threaten the planet and events escalate from there.

Players can create a human or alien character, but Defiance takes lessons in extra-terrestrial design from old-school Star Trek: these aliens are just humans with a bit of weird stuff on their head. Obviously, the game is

Reminds us of home. What?



limited in its visual design by the show it is accompanying, but it's still a shame to not have more variety available to the player.

We understand that creating a huge, living world is a difficult task, but Defiance is shockingly ugly. A vast fusion of muddy browns, awful textures and terrible draw-distance combine to create something that looks like a rubbish PS2 game. The amount of environment pop-in when driving along is almost laughable. Obviously, it will look better on PC, but if a game is releasing on console as well, it should at least be comparable.

Gameplay is better, standard third-person shooting in a shared world. There isn't much variety and it can start to feel like a grind, but the core loop of shooting things, finding bigger guns and shooting more things with those never fails to be compulsive. Huge boss battles that happen at random throughout the world can be good

Obviously, it will look better on PC, but if a game is releasing on console as well, it should at least be comparable

fun to start with, teaming up with hordes of other players to take down a huge foe. Again, it gets old quickly, but the idea is a good one.

As an MMO, Defiance may well be a lot better in six months time than it is now, and as such assigning a score is a bit of a risk. For right now though, this is a flawed but interesting take on the genre.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

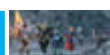
Ugly and full of bugs, but also quite fun and possessing some good ideas – an interesting start for an MMO.

Defiance might be a different game soon, but it still has a way to go.

50%



In a few months, it could be pretty good.



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct

We'd rather take our chances with a real zombie apocalypse

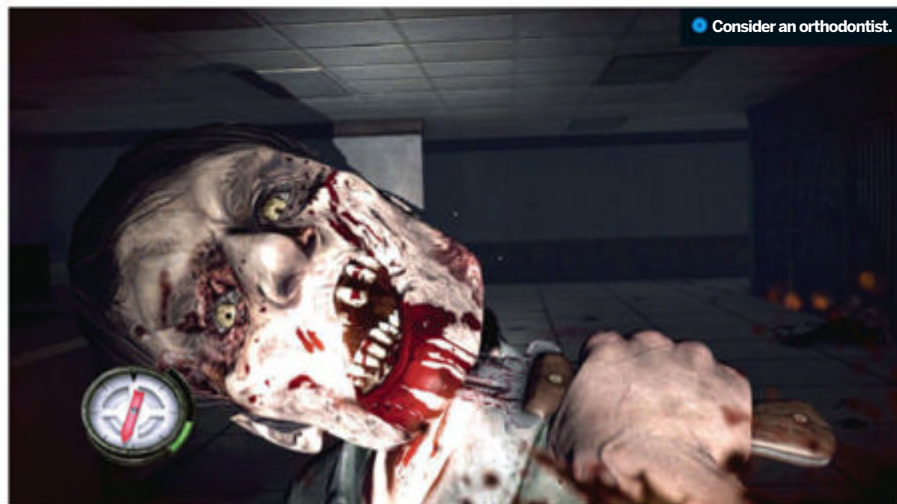
PS3 Think back to ten-ish years ago and remember a time when the licensed game was something to be shunned and avoided, laughed at from our horses on high. We've come a long way since then, games like *Batman: Arkham City* proving that games based on existing properties can be fantastic. *The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct* is not one of those games.

Survival Instinct is based on the TV show, unlike Telltale's excellent *The Walking Dead* games last year which used the original comics as their source material. Players control fan-favourite Daryl Dixon in a prequel that tells how Daryl and brother Merle end up in Atlanta for the first season.

The most startling thing about *Survival Instinct* initially is how dog ugly it is. Textures are extremely low resolution, muddy and blurry, shadows and environment detail pops in at random and character models are lifeless and nondescript. Seriously, this is one of the worst looking games we've played this generation, if not the very worst. It's just horrendous. We've seen PSone games with better assets than this.

Gameplay takes some inspiration from PC indie smash *Day Z*, a first-person survival game where scavenging items and avoiding conflict are often the best ways to survive. Daryl and company are on a cross-country trip to get away from the zombies, and resources are scarce. A limited amount of inventory space means you should have to carefully balance what you take – food to regain health, ammo for guns or fuel for your car? As it happens, none of it really matters, or makes any difference.

Stealth is emphasised over a direct approach, sneaking around zombies and taking them down from behind the best way to traverse the levels safely. Crouch down, sneak up behind a walker and Daryl can take them out with an instant knife kill. That's all it ever is, and it gets old fast. It doesn't even work half the time, with zombie AI totally random as to whether it spots you or not. Sometimes a walker will race directly at you from miles away, while another fails to notice you shooting a gun right in front of it. It's hard to plan a stealthy advance when you have no idea how the enemies will react.



DETAILS

Publisher
Activision
Developer
Terminal Reality
Price
£39.99
Players
1
Genre
FPS
Age Rating
18
Website
thewalkingdead
survivalinstinct.com
Twitter
@TerminalReality
Facebook
facebook.com/
TheWalkingDead
GameFans

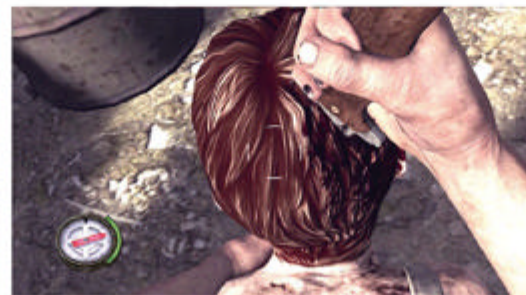
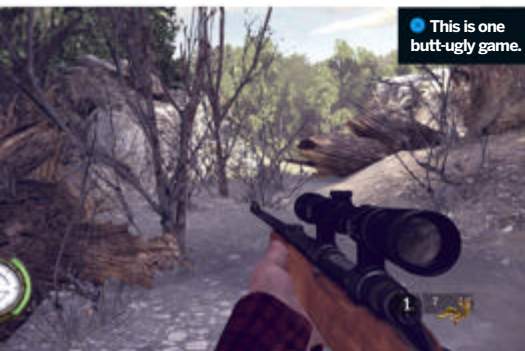
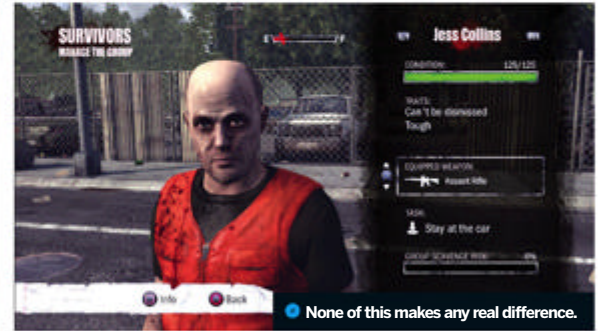
Early on we found a lead pipe, which is more powerful than Daryl's knife and became practically the only weapon we then used for the rest of the game. Unfortunately, you can't then drop the knife – it's still used for stealth kills, so takes up a useless spot in your inventory for the remainder.

Killing zombies never changes. Hit them in the head with your pipe three times. Repeat. Sure, you can use a gun every now and then, but they make too much noise and ammo is too rare for you to do it too often. So you hit them in the head with your pipe, again and again.

Occasionally, Daryl will be swarmed by a pack of walkers, triggering a sort of QTE where you line up a reticule with Mr. Zombie's face and stab him in the brain. Then the next guy in line grabs you, and you do it again. It can go on for a laughably long time, a queue of 20 zombies all waiting in line to have a gnaw at your face. It's bizarre that in a game about avoiding large conflicts, the best way to take out a massive group of zombies is to get purposely swarmed by them, easily clearing the area with your brutally repetitive and borderline psychotic takedown method.

Every choice is a false one with no real consequence. Driving from one town to the next, you can opt to take a route that uses little fuel but has a high chance of breakdown, or the opposite. But whether you run out of fuel or break down, you stop off at a town and

The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct



have to find some stuff. It's exactly the same either way, and the small number of maps is repeated ad nauseum.

Characters can be helped and saved, joining Daryl's team. Only problem is, your car has a limited number of seats, so that guy you just saved is being left to die anyway. None of these characters contribute anything to the plot, regardless, saying nothing after they are first rescued.

Norman Reedus and Michael Rooker contribute their voices to the game, but both sound bored out of their skulls. It wouldn't surprise us if all the acting in the game was recorded on the first take, in one day. It's a painful reminder of the dark days of videogame voice acting.

The Walking Dead: Survival Instinct is one of the worst games we can remember playing, and we've played a lot of games. Avoid this like the (zombie) plague and go play/replay Telltale's series instead.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

Genuinely one of the worst games we've ever played, considering the money and time Activision could have pumped into this there is no reason for it to be so awful. Regardless of how much you love the show, **STAY AWAY.**

20%



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

The Walking Dead

Home to some of gaming's toughest choices



• Zombies look pretty hilarious when taken out of context.



DETAILS

Publisher
Telltale Games
Developer
In-house
Price
£19.99
Players
1
Genre
Adventure
Age Rating
18
Website
telltalegames.com/
walkingdead
Twitter
@telltalegames
Facebook
facebook.com/
TheWalking
DeadGame



Well, we've seen what a terrible *Walking Dead* game looks like – now it's time to review a brilliant one.

The Walking Dead was released last year as a series of five downloadable episodes, but a collected disc release is now available for those tin-foil-hat types who are afraid of the Internet. If you've yet to experience Telltale's spin on the media juggernaut, now you have no excuse.

Telltale is well known by PC gamers for its episodic point-and-click adventure games and *The Walking Dead* further improves a formula that has been constantly refined over the years. Players control university lecturer Lee Everett, on his way to prison after being accused of killing his wife's lover. Whether he really did is left ambiguous, at least at this stage, but it matters little as a handy zombie apocalypse gets in the way of his pending incarceration. Events conspire and Lee soon finds himself looking after young girl Clementine, left alone after her babysitter was bitten while her parents are away.

This is an extremely story-driven experience, arguably more of an interactive TV show than a "proper" videogame. For the most part, players watch as the story unfolds, choosing how Lee responds in conversations with other characters. The kicker is that these choices are timed, so there's no taking ages to pick the best response. The harsh limit on choosing how to reply can sometimes lead you

to saying something you later regret, almost like real life. There's never a single 'correct' response, and depending on how Lee acts, the story can branch off in a variety of ways. It's fascinating to go back and see how playing Lee as a different person can affect the plot.

Breaking up the story are puzzle sections, where players have full control over Lee and attempt to solve whatever problem is hindering their progress. In truth, calling these bits puzzles is a little bit of a stretch, as none will remotely tax your little brain, existing for the sake of pace and variation rather than head-scratching.

So, in a game that revolves entirely around story, the quality of that story is essentially the only important thing. Luckily, *The Walking Dead* features one of the best-written plots yet seen in videogames, taking players on an emotional journey they won't soon forget.

The relationship between Lee and Clementine is the core that everything else revolves around, a surrogate father and daughter thrown together by events beyond their control. The game does a marvellous job of making players truly care for these two, investing in their characters on an emotional level and really giving a shit about what happens next.

A great supporting cast round things out, all wonderfully acted and sporting their own complex histories and desires. These are some

of the most human characters you'll come across in a game, with real weaknesses and strengths to employ, exploit or dodge.

Over the five episodes, players will grow attached to these characters, making the inevitable sticky demise of most of them mean that much more. Playing the game in small chunks over the course of a year felt like revisiting old friends, but being able to go through the entire thing at your own pace is a welcome benefit to starting the game now.

It's hard to detail exactly how the story is so brilliant without spoiling key points, but needless to say, a lot of bad things are going to happen to good people. This is a mature plot and one definitely not for kids. It's never exploitatively violent, but doesn't shy away from showing the nasty stuff when it has to.

Lee's choices have real consequence, and you'll be left wondering if things could have gone differently. In actuality, not too much: player choices affect a huge range of things during the story but the key plot points are fixed. Everyone will get the same base story, with their experience of it made unique by how they choose to portray Lee. It can be argued that this is a mere illusion of choice if the destination is always the same, but the end goal isn't as important as how the player gets there.

Based in the world of the original comics rather than the popular TV show, the game has a cartoony, surprisingly colourful style that



• Well this seems pleasant. Maybe everything is finally going to be okay.



Or you
could try



Dead Rising 2 Issue 197
It's got zombies in it but otherwise, it's totally different.
Mindless bloody fun. **78%**



The Walking Dead



THERE WILL BE BLUB

It's okay to cry when something is proper sad

WE WEREN'T KIDDING when we said *The Walking Dead* is affecting on an emotional level. We are hardened bastards here at **Play**, tougher than a \$2 steak due to years of relentless games journalism and general badass living. But even we, raised on a diet of meat, testosterone and Schwarzenegger, cried like babies as the riveting climax unfolded. Don't worry, we won't spoil it (well, any more than this does) but if it doesn't make you weep like a child who just scraped their knee, you clearly aren't human. It's testament to the game's quality that it manages to evoke such a reaction out of players, something few past titles have ever done.



emphasizes the emotion on characters faces. It's a style that works well, never detracting from the serious subject matter at hand. In terms of raw polygon count, it's not the best looking game in the world, but it's never anything less than good enough.

Most of you interested in *The Walking Dead* have already played it, but holdouts and those who missed it the first time round simply need to get it now. One of the best games of last year on a single disc – it really doesn't get much better than that.

Sam Smith

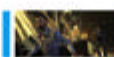
VERDICT

A gaming experience that is truly unlike any other, *The Walking Dead* should be required playing for anyone who considers themselves a fan of our favourite medium. It will make you laugh, it will make you cry, and it's got zombies in it.

92%



Previously...
in Play



Issue 221

"The peak of Telltale's storytelling power, with increasingly difficult choices and great writing to back it up."



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

There are a number of playful moments, including one for eagle-eyed detectives that all but gives away one of the game's biggest surprises.

Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut

The weirdest game of the generation just got weirder



Even if you haven't played *Deadly Premonition* before, you've surely heard of it. This is, after all, the game that earned such a divisive reception upon its original release in 2010 that it subsequently won the Guinness World Record for Most Polarising Survival Horror Game, a badge publisher Rising Star Games has proudly splashed all over its online marketing for this update. It may be more of a known quantity these days, then, but if you're experiencing Hidetaka "Swery" Suehiro's dizzying, demented vision for the first time, no amount of plot summaries or critical dissections can quite prepare you for what it's like to actually play. The word 'unique' is overused in gaming analysis, but you'd be hard pressed to argue that it doesn't apply here.

That isn't to say its ideas are all entirely new. The setup is a direct lift from *Twin Peaks*, as an aloof, coffee-swilling FBI agent shows up in a small backwater town to investigate the ritualistic murder of a young woman. Its action sequences bring to mind any number of survival horror games, while the daily investigative portion of the game offers something akin to *Shenmue*'s unhurried pace, the residents of Greenvale following predictable daily routines, with the town itself entirely open to explore at leisure. Yet the pacing of the game and the way its disparate ingredients are blended – not to mention the

many side activities on offer – conspire to create a heady, unfamiliar brew with a distinctive, if acquired, taste.

It's been described as "so bad it's good", but such a reductive appraisal does *Deadly Premonition* a disservice. Admittedly, by most standards, individual components are poor: the graphics, even with increased sharpness, improved textures and other minor augments, are weak, while the sound effects and musical cues are often badly mixed, occasionally coming close to drowning out the dialogue, or clashing horribly with one another. The controls have received a welcome overhaul with the ability to customise commands, yet driving still feels like dragging a full shopping trolley with one dodgy wheel, even if it's a little easier to steer in a straight line without careering off-road every 100 yards.

Other elements, however, are genuinely excellent. Though the script rarely strikes a consistent tone, veering wildly between the serious and the comic (often within a single scene), it blends the authentic mundanity of daily dialogues with sharp observations and memorably surreal lines, some of which have already passed into memes. The characterization is often exceptional: everyone is realistically flawed in some way, while protagonist Francis York Morgan ("please, just call me York – that's what everyone calls me") is



DETAILS

Publisher
Rising Star Games
Developer
Access Games
Price
£29.99
Players
1
Genre
Horror?
Age Rating
18+
Website
deadlypremonitionthegame.com
Twitter
@Swery65
Facebook
facebook.com/deadlyprem



by turns arrogant and inappropriate, smug and abrasive. Despite all this, it's impossible not to root for him, partly thanks to a brilliant narrative device that has him regularly discuss events with his alter ego, Zach. This particular quirk allows York to address the player directly under the guise of talking to Zach, and as such we feel more involved in the investigation, even as the story gets progressively stranger.

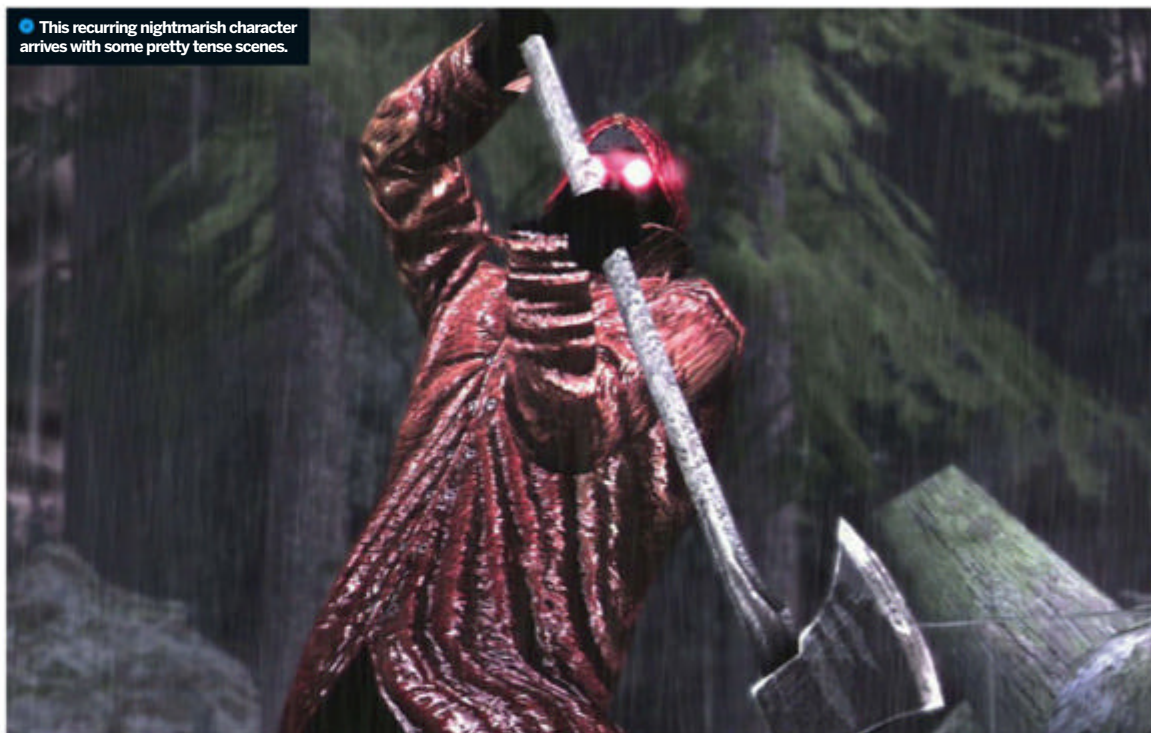
Even its weaker moments often serve a useful purpose. The nightmarish horror interludes, which see York battle zombie-like enemies throughout large, labyrinthine interiors, generate a tangible sense of unease. Whether it's by accident or design is debatable: many believe *Resident Evil*'s clumsy controls and awkward camera angles played a crucial role in unsettling the player, and there's a similar case to be made here. That the interiors are confusingly samey is likely down to budgetary constraints, yet it only increases the desire to get out of there quickly. The odd music selections might ease the tension of the story's





At times York regales Zach with details of some of his gruesome cases, sharing a disgusting example with his smalltown colleagues during dinner.

This recurring nightmarish character arrives with some pretty tense scenes.



Move functionality is a welcome inclusion – pointer and gesture controls are responsive, though there's no real advantage over using a DualShock.

darkest moments, but their intrusiveness contributes to the pervasively weird atmosphere. Crucially, there's nothing fake or calculated about any of it.

Above all else, it's a game with ambition and ideas, and its willingness to throw everything at the wall to see what sticks feels refreshing next to so much focus-tested blandness. This is wild, unbridled creativity with all its rough edges on show, and for every scrappy aside, there's an inspired design choice. The split-screen chases where you're tailed by a raincoat-clad axeman, simultaneously looking over York's shoulder and seeing him through the killer's eyes, are among the most thrillingly intense QTEs we've experienced this side of *Resi 4*.

In truth, this *Director's Cut* doesn't fundamentally change much, though new narrative bookends provide further texture and an excuse for those who've already followed York down this particular rabbit hole to leap back in. And that's fine, because this is a game that

Nothing can quite prepare you for what it's like to actually play *Deadly Premonition*

deserves to be preserved as it was, not least because in the current industry climate it's hard to imagine we'll see its enigmatic like any time soon. Yes, at times some of its choices might be difficult to fathom. But as York reminds us, "life is fun because of the mysteries." And *Deadly Premonition* has plenty of those.

Chris Schilling

VERDICT

***Deadly Premonition: The Director's Cut* is a curious confection. If you're a fan of esoteric games, you should add it to your collection. So says Mr. Schilling.**

82%



EVIL RESIDENTS?

Why we love Greenvale's quirky cast

AS YORK'S ADVENTURE begins, he's exploring a town full of potential suspects, and the behaviour of many of them only attracts further doubt. Yet from the elderly lady who constantly carries a cooking pot to the skullmask-wearing magnate who communicates in cryptic couplets through a white-suited aide ("so says Mr. Stewart") they're all memorable, and by observing their routines and engaging them in conversation, you begin to peel away the surface oddness to find the humanity beneath. Indeed, at heart, *Deadly Premonition* is a love story between two damaged characters, as York and deputy sheriff Emily's relationship develops slowly and quietly from early animosity to tentative affection.

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Persona 4 Arena

Every day's great at your Junes



DETAILS

Publisher
Zen United
Developer
Arc System Works/
Atlus
Price
£34.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Fighting
Age Rating
12
Website
personaeurope.com
Twitter
@PersonaEurope
Facebook
facebook.com/
PersonaEurope

PS3 Let's start this off with a plea to Atlus: please, sort out your European publishing strategy. We are so sick of waiting months, even years, for games that Japan and America get immediately. Right, that's off our chest. We feel a lot better.

Persona 4 Arena is finally here, and about time too. Developed jointly by Atlus and Arc System Works, the studio responsible for fighting game hits *Guilty Gear* and *BlazBlue*, this is a true sequel to *Persona 4*, revisiting Inaba and picking up the story a few months later. Our previously mute protagonist, now named Yu Narukami, visits his friends for the holidays and discovers another mystery involving the Midnight Channel that warrants further investigation.

The Midnight Channel this time takes the form of a fighting tournament, pitting our friends against each other. That's right, this isn't an RPG like its predecessor but a full-fledged fighting game developed by one of the best studios in the business. *Persona 4 Arena* isn't some quick spin-off – this is a real, hardcore fighter with serious potential.

Story mode is an expansive visual novel with the odd fight thrown in. Series fans will enjoy it but for newcomers it won't make much sense, and it does go on a bit. A shorter arcade mode has more action, and the expected score attack, versus modes and extensive online features all appear as well. Everything you've come to expect from a modern fighting game is here.

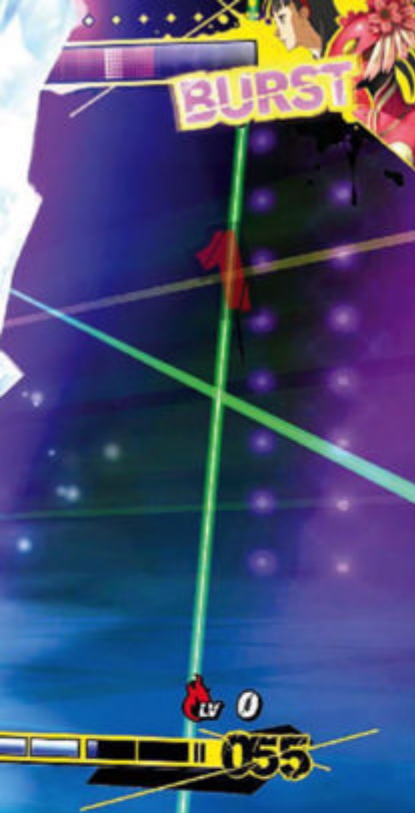
For fans of *Persona 4*, like us, seeing all the characters you love back in action is truly like revisiting old friends. The entire main cast of *P4* make a return as playable fighters, and a couple of original characters as well as a few old hands from *Persona 3* round out the cast. With 13 faces to choose from it's not the biggest cast in fighting games but each is unique and full of nuance and depth, with a variety of play styles from the long-range zoning of Naoto to the up-close rushdown of Akihiko. There's something for everyone, and mastering one of these characters will take serious time and skill. Which is exactly what we want from our fighting games.



Or you
could try



Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition Issue 209
Arguably the best fighting game ever made
92%



ONLINE MODE RATED

Bustin' noobs and bodying fools

WE'VE COME TO expect great online modes from Arc System Works games and *P4A* doesn't disappoint. All the features seen in *BlazBlue* are present here, with ranked and quick matches as well as lobbies and tournaments. Lobbies can be customised to create the precise type of fight you want, and even the manner in which players rotate can be changed. Connection speed obviously depends on how close the opponent is, but playing other Europeans is usually silky smooth and lag free. Hopefully the EU release will see an influx of new players and create a vibrant, active online scene. ★★★★★



The game is played with four buttons, lending itself well to pad control, although if you aren't playing a fighting game on an arcade stick, you're doing it wrong. Two buttons access your character's light and heavy attacks, and the other two their light and heavy persona moves.

Each fighter can summon a 'persona', a physical manifestation of their inner selves which is basically a big bloody monster thing. Using your persona to complement and cover your attack is a huge part of playing *P4A* successfully, and skilful players will essentially be controlling two characters at once.

Your persona has its own health bar, in a way, and if it gets hit four times your character is "persona broken", rendering them unable to use their inner power as well as various other moves for some time. Careful use of your persona is key – not too much, not too little.

Otherwise, this is similar to other Arc System Works games. Action is fast and furious, with dashes, air-dashes, rolls, sweeps, hops, special moves, SP moves, supers, three types of burst and various other systems to

learn. Flashy combos are the order of the day, often taking the fight to the air before slamming it back down to the tarmac.

It sounds complex, and to be fair, it is. But learning to play is surprisingly simple. A step-by-step tutorial mode takes players through every single system in a straightforward manner, giving you tasks to complete so you learn by doing. It's the kind of thing that Arc System Works has already done well in *BlazBlue* and it's extremely welcome here. Further character-specific trials teach specific moves, and these go from nice and simple to really freaking hard to test the masters.

Despite how complex it can get, this is still the easiest Arc System Works game to get into yet. The pace is a little bit slower, combos aren't quite as long and almost every special move is accessed by a variation of the classic quarter-circle motion. Don't misunderstand; at a high level there is a lot of execution and pulling off long, damaging combos will require some finger finesse. But newcomers and scrubs can easily learn enough to enjoy themselves and smack some dudes around.

P4A is lovely to look at, full of wonderfully animated HD sprites and big, bombastic super moves. The vibrant colour palette of *Persona 4*, with loads of bright yellows and neon pinks, carries over wonderfully and lends the same sense of youthful fun it did before. Fans of *Persona 3* and *4* will also recognise several returning and remixed music tracks, a great nostalgic bonus for old hands. *Persona 3* still has the best battle music of any RPG.

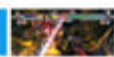
It took a while to get here, but *Persona 4 Arena* is one of the best fighting games you can buy and a must for fans of the genre. Tune in and throw down.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

The wait is finally over and we couldn't be happier. Essential for both *Persona* fans and fighting game enthusiasts, *Persona 4 Arena* is a joy to play. A huge story mode, rock-hard trials and great online will keep players occupied for a long time.

91%



THINK YOU KNOW XBOX?

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X360

BLOWN OUT BIG
BATTLEFIELD 4
IS EA READY FOR THE CROWN?

GRAND THEFT
AUTO V
HUGE AMOUNTS OF NEW INFO!

ASSASSIN
CREED BLACK FLAG
WE TALK NEXT WITH UBISOFT

METRO:
LAST LIGHT
AS PRETTY AS ALL THAT?

HAS THIS
GENERATION
GONE ON TOO LONG?

WORLD'S FIRST REVIEW
GEARS OF WAR JUDGMENT
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It's another picture of someone playing golf. What did you expect?



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW



Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14



DETAILS

Publisher
EA Sports
Developer
EA Tiburon
Price
£39.99
Players
1-24
Genre
Sports
Age Rating
3+
Website
easports.com/
uk/tiger-woods
Twitter
@EASPORTSGOLF
Facebook
facebook.com/
TigerWoodsPGATOUR

The tiger who came to tee

Reviewing yearly sports games can be seen as something of a futile exercise. If you love the sport, chances are you'll enjoy the incremental changes and roster updates. If not, you'll probably be put off by a game that seems largely similar to the one before. Despite criticism, it's clearly a model that works, or EA wouldn't bother pumping out a new game every 12 months.

So, unsurprisingly, *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 14* is very similar to the *Tiger Woods* game that came out last year. The big feature this time is 'Legends of the Majors' mode, a trip through golfing history that has players tackling key moments from the past. Presentation apes the era, with the late 1800s viewed in a grainy sepia tone, archaic commentary crackling over the top. Skip

ahead to the Seventies and things take on a more lurid feel with sickly yellow stands and delightfully awful clothing.

The mode takes players through a mixture of historical events and dream matches between golfers of different eras. Each stage has two levels of challenge and getting everything will take some time. It's a neat feature and one that golf nerds will enjoy, but casual fans will have a hard time recognising some of these historical heroes.

Otherwise, this is basically the same game as last year. The core golfing is still decent, winding back on the stick before swinging forward after carefully aiming your shot. The speed and accuracy of the swing determines how accurate the shot will be. Simple as that. Within these simple confines lies a range of deeper options to tweak your



swing, adjusting the curve of the shot or where precisely you hit the ball. All four of the Majors events are in the game for the first time, as is the LPGA women's league and the ability to golf at any time of day or night – but when it comes down to it, not much has really changed.

That's the crux of things. How much do you like golf games? If you play each one religiously you'll probably appreciate the small changes; if you just like to dabble it might seem like a waste of money. Judging it from a neutral viewpoint, one new mode and a few tiny changes do not justify buying a new game, and as such it can't be awarded a great score. Still, if you love hitting tiny balls into tiny holes, this is the one for you!

Sam Smith

VERDICT

Well, it's definitely a new *Tiger Woods* game. *Legends of the Majors* is a fun trip through time that will teach golf fans a thing or two, but otherwise there is very little here we haven't seen before. As always, one for the dedicated.

61%



Or you
could try



Fight Night Champion Issue 203
Boxing is a better sport than golf because people punch each other. Yeah! **88%**



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

• Yeah, there's a reason it's an 18.



Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge

DETAILS

Publisher
Tecmo Koei
Developer
Team Ninja
Price
£29.99
Players
1-8
Genre
Action
Age Rating
18
Website
teamninja-studio.
com/ng3/uk
Twitter
@TeamNINJASTUDIO
Facebook
facebook.com/
teamninjastudio

Apology accepted

PS3 Buying the first version of a *Ninja Gaiden* game at this point is a bit silly really. We all know that a snazzy update will be released a year down the line, adding characters and fixing broken stuff. You could question the need for these newer versions previously, but *Razor's Edge* is not only welcome but necessary.

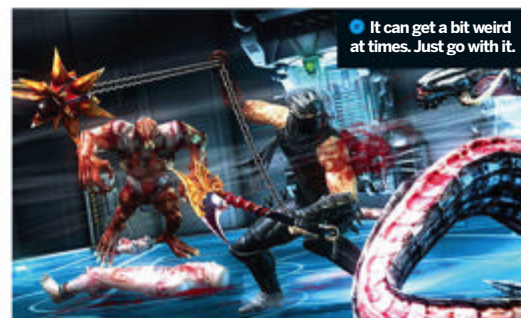
Ninja Gaiden 3 had huge flaws, taking a franchise known for brutal hack-and-slash gameplay and trying to turn it into a scripted, cinematic spectacle with broadly simplified combat and a lame, over-dramatic story. Fans were understandably upset.

Razor's Edge goes a huge way towards making *Ninja Gaiden 3* a great game. Gone is the simple, button-mashing combat, replaced with the classic precision and depth that *Ninja Gaiden* is known for. Each weapon has a huge move list, and unlike the original, there are plenty of sharp things to play with too. As well as Ryu's classic katana, other fan favourites return – the staff, the scythe, and of course those badass claws.

It feels much more like *Ninja Gaiden 2* than 3, which is a very good thing. Combat is fluid and bone-crunchingly meaty. Bad guys get cut to literal pieces, limbs flying off as Ryu goes to town. And once an enemy is down an arm or leg, they can be dispatched instantly with a vicious execution move.

Playing well makes the game a thing of beauty. Ryu flies across the battlefield in a shower of blood and body parts, foes falling in an incredibly satisfying orgy of murder. This ain't one for kids. It's one for deliciously twisted adults, not unlike us here at **Play**.

Weapons, skills and Ninpo magic can now be upgraded over the course of the campaign and with good cause. *Ninja Gaiden 3* might have been too easy, but *Razor's Edge* returns to the punishing difficulty we expect from the



• It can get a bit weird at times. Just go with it.

series. Even on Normal this is a challenging game, with some boss fights in particular causing much gnashing of teeth and pulling of hair. Go up to the harder difficulties and things get insanely challenging.

Razor's Edge includes all the DLC for *Ninja Gaiden 3* on the disc, with three additional characters being playable in Ayane, Kasumi and Momiji. All play differently enough to make it worth trying them out, and mastering the game as every character will take serious time and equally serious dedication.

This is the game *Ninja Gaiden 3* always should have been. The story is still garbage and the graphics a tad dated now, but with combat so violently satisfying, nothing else much matters. Welcome back, Ryu Hayabusa.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

A return to form after an unfortunate misstep, it feels awesome to get back into Ryu Hayabusa's ninja shoes and cut some dudes to pieces. It's challenging, brutal and rewarding, so self-professed hardcore gamers should be all over this noise.

80%



• Bosses can get really difficult.

Or you could try

Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance Issue 228
Another game where you play as a ninja, except this time you are also a ROBOT. **95%**

Bit of a step up from hunting boars, eh?

DRAGON



RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon

In the future there will be robots



DETAILS

Publisher

Ubisoft

Developer

Ubisoft Montreal

Price

£11.99

Players

1

Genre

FPS

Age Rating

18+

Website

far-cry.ubi.com

Twitter

@Ubisoft

Facebook

facebook.com/ubisoft



If you were making an expansion pack for *Far Cry 3*, what would you do? Continue the adventures of

Jason Brody and his slightly psychopathic ways? Follow a new character to experience the story from a different perspective?

Expand the Rook Islands for more exploration fun? Nah. How about you make an insane homage to cheesy Eighties action films that has nothing to do with the original game? Now we're talking.

Blood Dragon takes place in the dystopian future of 2007, after nuclear war has ravaged the world ("the apocalypse has had an apocalypse," claims the narrator). Players control cyber-commando Rex "Power" Colt, voiced by Eighties hero Michael Biehn, who

must fight an enemy army of evil cyborgs while fending off enormous 'blood dragons' and saving the girl. In case you can't tell, it's not entirely serious.

The presentation in *Blood Dragon* is wonderfully perfect in an over-the-top way, evoking memories of a time when all music was made on synths and hazy neon pinks were the only colour worth caring about. Cutscenes are styled to look like a bad VHS cartoon and using Colt's 'cyber-eye' (the equivalent of Jason Brody's scope) brings up an interface that is almost identical to looking through the eyes of a Terminator. Indeed, the whole game is rammed with references to Eighties culture, from Rex humming the first few strains of Slayer's *Raining Blood* to

a mission that tasks you with killing turtles infesting the basement with pizza boxes. It's genuinely funny and plays on many videogame tropes as it commits them, including one of the most amusing tutorials we've played in some time.

Essentially, *Blood Dragon* plays identically to *Far Cry 3*, although Rex can run faster, jump higher, breathe underwater, suffer no falling damage and be generally just more of a badass than anyone else. Guns have been repurposed and given fancy new names, like the 'Fazertron' assault rifle or 'Terror 4000' gatling gun. Even the standard bow has been given a bright blue neon sheen.

A new island to explore, a bunch of camps to invade and a decent few hours of story missions make *Blood Dragon* decent bang for your buck. The gameplay might not have changed much but the insane presentation makes this some of the most fun we've had with a game so far this year. For anyone who yearns for the days of *Knight Rider*, new-wave, big hair and cyborg arms, *Blood Dragon* is an essential bit of bizarre nostalgia.

Sam Smith

VERDICT

More great *Far Cry 3* gameplay wrapped up in a crazy, hyper-stylish neon Eighties bubble. Genuinely funny madness with awesome music, giant weapons and enormous dragons that shoot lasers out of their eyes – what more could you possibly need?

85%



TOP 10 GAMES FOR THE REAL HARD CORE

SELF-PROFESSED 'HARDCORE' GAMERS LOVE NOTHING MORE THAN A CHALLENGE. GAMING ISN'T ABOUT HAVING FUN – IT'S ABOUT PROVING YOUR WORTH, BEATING THE TOUGHEST TASKS AND BEING THE BEST OF THE BEST. HERE ARE TEN GAMES TO TEST EVEN THE MOST DEDICATED...



DARK SOULS

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 3

You might have noticed by now that we really, really like *Dark Souls*, to the extent that esteemed **Play** writer Sam Smith has every single Trophy and finished the game about five times. The guy is obsessed. *Dark Souls* is a very hard game, and even the things you can do to make it easier can backfire. Players need to be in 'human' form to summon other players to help them. The problem here is that when in human form, other players can invade your game at will and straight-up murder you. Do you run the risk or do you soldier on alone? What a game.



MGR: REVENGEANCE

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 3

A recent release but it deserves its place on our list. *Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance* is *hard*. Even on Normal difficulty things can get tough, but crank it up to Very Hard or even, god forbid, Revengeance mode, and you are playing an entirely different game. Enemies can stun Raiden in a single hit and it only takes a couple more after that to put you down for good. It takes perfect parrying and careful awareness of your surroundings to survive when faced with a legion of huge cyborg dudes.



DEVIL MAY CRY 3

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 2

The hardest and best entry in the *Devil May Cry* franchise, *Dante's Awakening* is seriously tough. The true test of any *DMC* game is tackling its increasing difficulty levels, and facing *DMC3* on Dante Must Die mode is really, really tough. If you are shooting for S ranks on every mission then things just get even harder, as even the slightest mistake will lead to a certain death and a mission restart. Succeeding at the highest levels of *Devil May Cry 3* requires a lot of practice to truly master the game. Hardcore.



GOD HAND

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 2

The final game from Capcom's fabled Clover Studio, *God Hand* was developed with the explicit purpose of appealing to hardcore gamers. That it did, to the extent that reviews were polarising – this was a game that you either 'got' or simply couldn't play. The freedom to create your own combos in *God Hand* was staggering, and this is a title you could play for years and still find neat new tricks to try. It's also hilarious – Gene's tale of ancient demons and mystical arms is rammed full of stupid jokes and madcap comedy. Play this game.

10 Games For The Real Hardcore



GUILTY GEAR

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 3

Most fighting games are pretty hardcore, but few require more skill and time than Arc System Works' 2D brawler. It's not that hard to get into, but playing *Guilty Gear* at a high level is something that requires months, if not years, of practice and hard work. Jumping online and fighting the pros without knowing what you are doing is going to be a traumatic, painful experience. It might sound crap to some, but hardcore gamers love nothing more than mastering a difficult game. Acing *Guilty Gear* is one of the best ways to prove your uber-gaming credentials.



VIRTUA FIGHTER

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 3

Essentially the 3D equivalent of *Guilty Gear*, *Virtua Fighter* is even easier to pick up and play, but has endless levels of depth and finesse for those dedicated enough to put the time in. It really is simple to start playing – the game only uses three buttons, after all. *Virtua Fighter* is devoid of gimmicks, a pure fighter where the most important things are the priority of mid, low and throw attacks, and knowing which moves leave you at a frame advantage and which don't. It's a lot of learning, and mastering *Virtua Fighter* is no mean feat.



XCOM

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 3

Our 2012 game of the year and a glorious reimagining of the original series that manages to feel both faithful and new. Oh yeah, and it's bloody hard. The proper way to play is in Ironman mode, a setting that gives you only one save file. Everything you do is immediately saved, and you can't go back and change it. If one of your elite, levelled-up soldiers bites the dust then they're gone for good. It's very easy to manoeuvre yourself into a totally unwinnable situation, your only option to restart the game and try again. Does it really get much more hardcore than that?



BAYONETTA

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 3

Bayonetta is arguably the best action game of this generation, with a huge variety of weapons and combos to master and loads of crazy set pieces and massive bosses to fight. Like many of the best hardcore games, it's actually very easy to pick up, with layers of complexity revealing themselves for those who are interested. The number of combos to learn and multiple difficulty levels give *Bayonetta* plenty of replay value for the big fans. It's a real shame the sequel seems to be Wii U exclusive, as we'd have loved to see what it'd be like on PlayStation 4.



WIPEOUT HD

■ **FORMAT:** PlayStation 3

We love *Wipeout* at **Play**, and we hope the end of Studio Liverpool doesn't mean the series is over. Even if it is, we can always enjoy a few rounds of *Wipeout HD*, especially since the odds of us having finished the bloody thing never get any higher. Getting everything, including the top rank on every course, is seriously tricky and will test even the most hardened speed freak to the limits of their ability. That's why we love it though, and we'd love a beautiful new *Wipeout* to herald the coming of the PS4. Imagine how wonderful that would look...



MONSTER HUNTER

■ **FORMAT:** PSP

Monster Hunter is huge in Japan and the fans it has over here will know just how hardcore it can be. It's essentially a series of increasingly difficult boss fights and downing a massive beast in *Monster Hunter* can take freaking ages, so don't mess up! It's not too hard to jump into, but mastering *Monster Hunter* is going to take hundreds of hours of grinding and fighting really tough bastards. There are thousands of different pieces of equipment to craft and consider when equipping your dude, with months worth of content for the diehards. Get stuck in!

THE BEST PSN PLATINUMS

THE PLAYSTATION STORE IS HOME TO SOME TRULY BRILLIANT AND ORIGINAL GAMES, BUT BEST OF ALL IS THAT MANY OF THESE ALSO COME WITH PLATINUM TROPHIES. WE'VE PICKED OUT SOME OF THE VERY BEST THE PSN STORE HAS TO OFFER, AND SHOWN YOU HOW YOU CAN COLLECT THOSE SHINY TROPHIES

OKAMI HD

■ PRICE: £15.99

Yes, it's an old PS2 game upscaled to make it look the part on PS3. But that doesn't stop *Okami HD* from being an excellent game all the same. Besides, the art style really helps it avoid ageing. As for Trophies, there aren't many that should really pose a struggle, so make sure you read each Trophy description before starting to know when to look out for particular events. Most of the Trophies are collectable/upgrade-based unlocks. The only one that you need to keep an eye on is 'Barking Up The Cherry Tree', which means getting an S rank at the end of the game. Providing you've got all the other Trophies this shouldn't be a problem, but make sure you use the Floral Finisher whenever you can. Oh, and you can't die more than five times, although using the Astral Pouch to revive doesn't count towards this. Hurrah.



CRYSIS

■ PRICE: £15.99

Technically this was a retail release, but since it only made its way to PS3 through the PSN we're counting it – and it really is a great FPS. You may as well start the game on Delta difficulty, since it isn't all that difficult and you'll mop up most of the Trophies anyway. Any combat-specific Trophies that you were unable to get you can always repeat through chapter select on an easier difficulty. While you're playing through also be sure to complete every secondary objective (yellow) that you come across, since this is mandatory. Apart from that, there's nothing to worry about.



THE WALKING DEAD

■ PRICE: £11.99

There usually isn't a month this game doesn't feature in our Trophy guides and it's for a good reason. *The Walking Dead* is not only a brilliant adventure game that you all need to play, but it also has the easiest Platinum available. All you need to do is play through the game, regardless of any decisions you make, and by the end of it the Platinum Trophy is yours. It really is that simple.

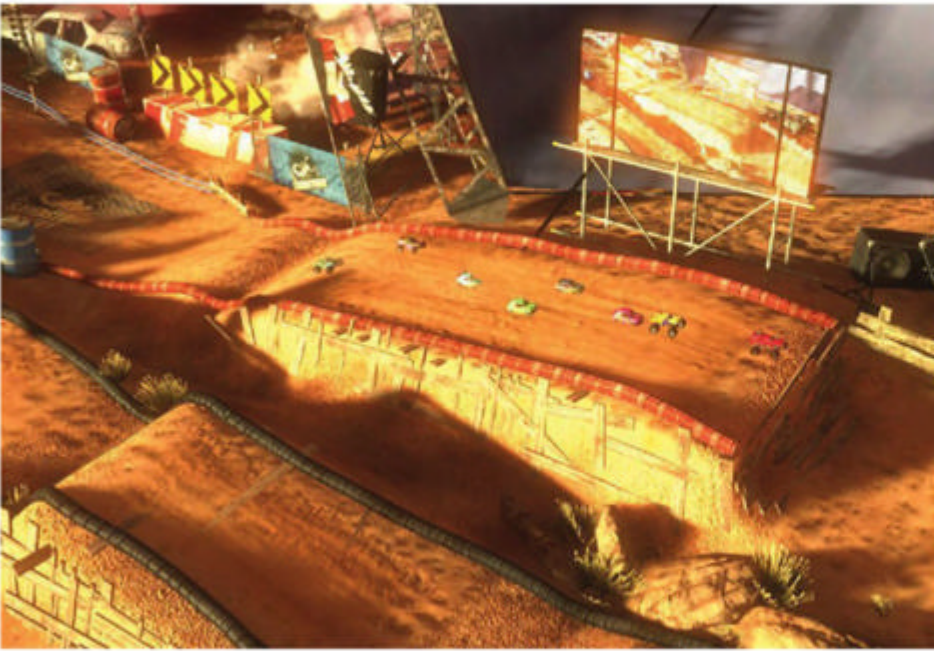


ROCKETBIRDS: HARDBOILED CHICKEN

■ PRICE: £6.49

This unique platform/shooter combo will give you a good ten hours of gameplay for a fairly low price. Trophy-wise, start early by making sure you collect all the red flags: there are three in every map and they only appear in sequence: collect the first and the second will appear and so on. Some of these flags will only be accessible by continually shooting an enemy onto the sign – be sure you can collect it yourself before killing all the guards. The rest of the Trophies are fairly self-explanatory, though you can only earn 'Fear the Spur' once you've collected all 45 flags.

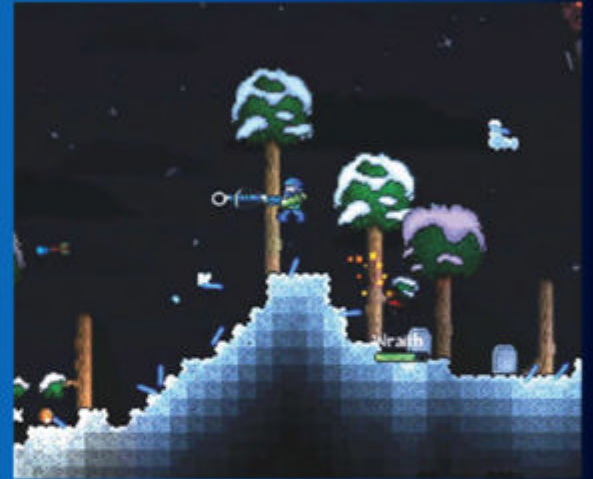
The Best PSN Platitudes



MOTORSTORM RC

■ PRICE: £4.79

More *Micro Machines* than *MotorStorm*, this game is a very well-made remote control car racer. The Platinum itself will take a little bit of persistence on your part since the later levels are tricky and can only be beaten with the kind of gradual practice and cornering knowledge that comes with consistent attempts. You will need at least one friend who has *MotorStorm RC* to get the Platinum, however, since some of the Trophies are based on the in-game leaderboard. There's a set of four 'under 10 minutes' Trophies too: use the leaderboard to check your times on each race, then improve your weakest times.



TERRARIA

■ PRICE: £11.99

One of the most original games on the PSN Store and the closest we're going to get to *Minecraft* on PS3. You *have* to download this. Earning the Platinum is going to take quite a bit of time – there's a lot of exploring and learning to do in *Terraria* – but you'll never be stuck for things to do. Most of the Trophies will unlock as you play, but a couple will take a little preparation, such as 'Hellevator'. You'll need to dig a long tunnel straight down, placing wooden platforms at jumpable distances to reach the Underworld as quickly as possible.



SOUND SHAPES

■ PRICE: £9.99

It might not look like much, but *Sound Shapes* is a pleasant little platformer that's well worth your time. The majority of the game's Trophies come alongside playing through the premade levels, but there are two other modes to play after this: Beat School and Death Mode. Beat School tasks you with identifying each of the notes in a soundtrack loop. How easy it'll be will depend on your ability to detect individual sounds. Death Mode is the hardest part, however, pitting you against challenging arenas while you try and collect a certain number of items. Keep at it though and the randomly spawning items *may* just go your way.



DUNGEON DEFENDERS

■ PRICE: £7.99

As a combination of loot-filled action RPG and tower defence, this game can really get under your skin. It'll take a lot of time and effort to unlock that Platinum, however, and quite a great deal of grinding. Start with a Tower Knight class since their towers will prove the most useful. Once he's at max level, during the build phase set up your defences then switch out to other classes to start levelling them up. Once you've got the attack patterns and the right defence down for each map, that's when you can start ticking off the different variations. Expect to put in hours and hours if you want to get that Platinum, though it's still a thoroughly enjoyable game even if you never do get that shiny award.

PLAY# PlayList

If you want to know what a game scored then these pages are for you

TEAM PICKS WE'VE MOSTLY BEEN PLAYING...



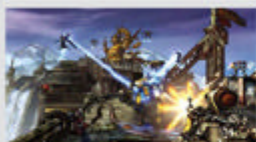
top five LUKE ALBIGÉS

- 1 Injustice: Gods Among Us
- 2 Okami HD
- 3 Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon
- 4 Soul Sacrifice
- 5 Persona 4 Arena



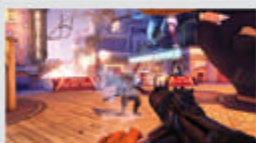
top five ANDY SALTER

- 1 The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim
- 2 Defiance
- 3 Dead Island: Riptide
- 4 BioShock Infinite
- 5 The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion



top five REBECCA RICHARDS

- 1 Borderlands 2
- 2 BioShock Infinite
- 3 Rock Band Blitz
- 4 Poker Night 2
- 5 Sleeping Dogs



top five SAM SMITH

- 1 BioShock Infinite
- 2 Persona 4 Arena
- 3 Ninja Gaiden 3: Razor's Edge
- 4 Virtue's Last Reward
- 5 Deadly Premonition

PS3 LISTING

game issue score

007 Legends	225	44%
3D Collection	195	75%
3D Dot Game Heroes	192	87%
50 Cent: Blood On The Sand	177	70%
Ace Combat: Assault Horizon	211	78%
The Adventures Of Tintin	212	58%
Afro Samurai	177	61%
Agarest: Generations Of War	187	78%
Agarest: Generations Of War 2	223	43%
Agarest: Generations Of War Zero	209	52%
Air Conflicts: Secret Wars	208	58%
Alice: Madness Returns	207	57%
Aliens: Colonial Marines	230	45%

Aliens vs Predator	189	79%
Alone In The Dark	173	70%
Alpha Protocol	193	83%
Ape Escape	208	55%
Arcana Heart 3	207	79%
Armored Core For Answer	173	65%
Armored Core 4	153	67%
Armored Core V	217	60%
Army Of Two	164	80%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	188	65%
Ar Tonelico Qoga: Knell Of Ar Ciel	203	27%
Ashes Cricket 2009	183	30%
Assassin's Creed	161	58%
Assassin's Creed II	186	89%
Assassin's Creed III	225	78%
Assassin's Creed: Brotherhood	199	91%

More than enough additions to take the Assassin's Creed formula into modern classic territory.

Assassin's Creed Revelations	212	75%
Asura's Wrath	216	67%
Atelier Rorona: The Alchemist Of Arland	198	77%
Backbreaker	193	70%
Band Hero	187	68%
Batman: Arkham Asylum	183	85%
Batman: Arkham City	211	94%

Rocksteady's sequel to the excellent Arkham Asylum is a serious contender for game of the year.

Battle Fantasia	176	67%
Battlefield: Bad Company	168	78%
Battlefield: Bad Company 2	190	93%
Battlefield 3	212	88%
Battleship	219	44%
Bayonetta*	187	93%
The Beatles: Rock Band	184	96%
Beijing 2008	168	54%
Beowulf	161	61%
Binary Domain	216	70%
Bionic Commando	179	82%
BioShock	172	93%
BioShock 2	189	88%
BioShock Infinite	230	97%

It's so rare to play something and know that it will be considered an all-time great. A wonderful FPS with deep, tactical combat. Essential.

Birds Of Steel	217	55%
BlackSite	163	43%
Blazestorm: The Hundred Years' War	160	58%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger	190	85%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift	198	94%
Blazing Angels	151	54%
Bleach: Soul Resurrección	209	63%
Blitz: The League II	172	67%
Blur	193	86%
Bodycount	210	54%
Borderlands	185	80%

game issue score

Borderlands 2	223	90%
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Borderlands 2 is an excellent lesson in sequel-making and is easily one of 2012's best games.

The Bourne Conspiracy	168	72%
Brink	206	67%
Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway	171	75%
Brütal Legend	185	79%
Bulletstorm	203	86%
Burnout Paradise	162	74%
Buzz!: Quiz TV	168	82%
Buzz! Quiz World	185	70%
Call Of Duty 3	151	77%
Call Of Duty: World At War	173	68%
Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare	160	88%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 2	186	94%
Call Of Duty: Modern Warfare 3	212	88%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops	199	94%



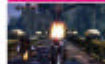
Treyarch's first genuinely brilliant entry to the series and a standard-bearer for fast-paced online shooters.

Call Of Duty: Black Ops II	226	80%
Call Of Juarez: Bound In Blood	181	85%
Call Of Juarez: The Cartel	208	30%
Captain America: Super Soldier	208	70%
Castlevania: Lords Of Shadow	197	85%
Carnival Island	213	53%
Cars 2	208	68%
Catherine	215	61%
Champion Jockey	210	50%
Chronicles Of Riddick: Assault On Dark Athena	178	87%
Child Of Eden	211	80%

Civilization Revolution	168	90%
Clash Of The Titans	193	65%
Clive Barker's Jericho	159	84%
The Club	163	80%
Colin McRae: DiRT	158	91%

Colin McRae: DiRT 2	184	87%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	178	65%
Conan	160	71%
Condemned 2	165	78%
Conflict: Denied Ops	164	50%
Crash Time 4: The Syndicate	218	37%
Create	199	71%
Cross Edge	182	59%
Crysis 2	204	72%
Crysis 3	230	61%

The Cursed Crusade	211	40%
Damnation	181	38%
Damage Inc: Pacific Squadron WWII	223	37%
Dance Dance Revolution	201	52%
Dante's Inferno	189	80%
The Darkness	154	91%
The Darkness II	215	76%
Dark Sector	165	62%
Dark Souls	211	90%



Sequel to one of the hardest games in recent times, Dark Souls is another superb release from developer From Software.

Dark Void	188	81%
Darksiders	188	83%
Darksiders II	221	86%
DC Universe Online	202	80%
de Blob 2	203	65%
Dead Or Alive 5	223	78%
Dead Island	210	79%
Dead Rising 2	197	78%
Dead Rising 2: Off The Record	211	61%
Dead Space	172	87%
Dead Space 2	201	92%



The point where the Dead Space series stepped up and became something to be genuinely excited about.

Dead Space 3	228	70%
Dead To Rights: Retribution	192	68%
Def Jam: Icon	151	79%
Def Jam Rapstar	199	72%
Demon's Souls	193	92%

game issue score

Destroy All Humans!: Path Of The Furon	178	29%
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Deus Ex: Human Revolution	209	91%
Devil May Cry 4	163	89%
Devil May Cry HD Collection	217	80%
DIRT 3	206	85%
DIRT Showdown	219	84%
Disgaea 3: Absence Of Justice	175	81%
Dishonored	224	92%



Stealth has never been so satisfying as it is in Dishonored. One of 2012's finest. Do the game a favour and play it sneaky.

DJ Hero	186	91%
DJ Hero 2	198	88%
Doctor Who: The Eternity Clock	220	32%
Doom 3: BFG Edition	225	69%
Dmc: Devil May Cry	227	93%



DmC injects new life into one of the best genres in all of gaming, and does so with a style and confidence that elevates it beyond its roots.

Dragon Age: Origins	186	82%
Dragon Age II	203	86%
Dragon Ball: Raging Blast	186	40%
Dragon Ball Z: Burst Limit	168	61%
Dragon's Dogma	218	48%
Driver: San Francisco	209	68%
Duke Nukem Forever	207	33%
Dungeon Siege III	206	80%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam	160	40%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 2	176	43%
Dynasty Warriors: Gundam 3	208	56%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	189	37%
Dynasty Warriors 6	164	30%
Dynasty Warriors 6: Empires	181	44%
Dynasty Warriors 7	204	32%
Dynasty Warriors 7: Empires	230	40%
EA Sports Active 2	200	81%
EA Sports Grand Slam Tennis	215	75%
EA Sports MMA	198	89%
Eat Lead	178	38%
EDF: Insect Armageddon	208	64%
The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion	152	91%
The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim	212	93%



WARNING: The latest addition to Bethesda's superb franchise will seriously damage your social life.

El Shaddai: Ascension Of The Metatron	208	77%
Enchanted Arms	152	69%
Enemy Territory: Quake Wars	168	60%
Enslaved: Odyssey To The West	197	83%
Epic Mickey 2: The Power Of Two	226	55%
Eternal Sonata	176	87%
Everybody's Golf 5*	158	88%
Everybody's Golf: World Tour	165	91%
Eye Of Judgment	159	65%
EyePet	185	83%
EyePet: Move	197	84%
FI 2010	197	86%
FI 2011	211	71%
FI 2012	223	79%
FI Race Stars	226	61%
FaceBreaker	170	55%
Fairytale Fights	186	51%
Fallout 3	173	97%



Fallout 3 lives up to its promise and then some. It's a damning portrayal of the consequences of war, and a compelling RPG experience.

Fallout: New Vegas	198	88%
Family Guy: Back To The Multiverse	227	40%
Fantastic Four: Rise Of The Silver Surfer	155	39%
Far Cry 2	172	74%
Far Cry 3	226	88%
F.E.A.R.	151	81%
F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin	176	87%
F.E.A.R. 3	208	60%
FIFA 08	159	84%
FIFA 09	171	87%
FIFA 10	184	90%
FIFA 11	197	91%

This month's new entries

The newest games, freshly squeezed among all your old favourites

BioShock Infinite	PS3	97%
Crysis 3	PS3	61%
Naruto Shippuden: Ultimate Ninja Storm 3	PS3	85%
Sniper Ghost Warrior 2	PS3	55%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	PSV	60%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	PSN	60%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	PSN	82%
Star Wars Pinball	PSN	79%

game	issue	score
FIFA 12	210	86%
FIFA 13	223	82%
FIFA Street (2012)	217	74%
FIFA Street 3	163	66%
FIFA World Cup 2010	192	70%
The Fight	199	42%
Fight Night Champion	203	88%
Fight Night Round 3	151	87%
Fight Night Round 4	181	84%
Final Fantasy XIII	190	85%
Final Fantasy XIII-2	214	80%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage	198	51%
Fist Of The North Star: Ken's Rage 2	230	58%
Folklore	158	66%
Formula One Championship Edition	151	72%
Fracture	171	72%
Front Mission Evolved	198	52%
Fuel	180	49%
Full Auto 2: Battlelines	151	69%
G-Force	183	59%
Game Of Thrones	220	39%
Genji: Days Of The Blade	151	38%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	83%
Ghost Recon Future Soldier	219	60%
Ghostbusters: The Videogame	180	80%
GI Joe	183	22%
The Godfather	151	37%
The Godfather II	178	38%
God Of War III	190	88%
God Of War: Ascension	230	90%
 With brilliantly reworked combat mechanics and stunning graphics, Ascension is a gloriously violent prequel to the series.		
God Of War Collection*	188	93%
God Of War Collection: Volume II	210	70%
The Golden Compass	162	32%
GoldenEye 007: Reloaded	213	63%
Gran Turismo 5	200	85%
Gran Turismo 5 Prologue	165	75%
Grand Theft Auto IV	166	98%
Green Day: Rock Band	194	77%
GTA: Episodes From Liberty City	191	94%
Guitar Hero III	160	90%
Guitar Hero 5	184	81%
Guitar Hero: Aerosmith	168	63%
Guitar Hero Greatest Hits	182	76%
Guitar Hero Metallica	179	88%
Guitar Hero: Van Halen	189	65%
Guitar Hero: Warriors Of Rock	197	71%
Guitar Hero World Tour	173	95%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 1	200	21%
Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2	208	37%
Harry Potter And The Half-Blood Prince	182	60%
Harry Potter And The Order Of The Phoenix	155	32%
Haze	167	64%
Heavenly Sword	157	71%
Heavy Rain	189	94%
Heavy Rain: Move Edition	198	70%
Heroes Over Europe	184	48%
Hitman: Absolution	225	93%
 It's still a bit rough around some edges, but there's no denying the scope, intelligence and passion poured into <i>Hitman: Absolution</i>.		
Hitman HD Trilogy	230	75%
Homefront	203	69%
The House Of The Dead: Overkill	212	75%
Hunted: The Demon's Forge	207	59%
Hyperdimension Neptunia	202	21%
Ice Age 3: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs	182	47%
Ice Age 4: Continental Drift: Artic Games	222	40%
Ico & Shadow Of The Colossus Classics HD	210	94%
IL-2 Sturmovik: Birds Of Prey	183	72%
The Incredible Hulk	168	52%
inFamous	180	81%
inFamous 2	207	83%
International Cricket 2010	194	61%
Inversion	220	49%
Iron Man	166	58%

game	issue	score
Iron Man 2	193	50%
The Jak And Daxter Trilogy	216	82%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
James Bond 007: Blood Stone	199	63%
James Cameron's Avatar: The Game	187	64%
JASF: Jane's Advanced Strike Fighters	217	30%
John Daly's ProStroke Golf	197	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	159	78%
Just Cause 2	190	87%
Kane & Lynch: Dead Men	160	73%
Kane & Lynch 2: Dog Days	196	71%
Katamari Forever	184	88%
Killzone 2	176	93%
Killzone 3	202	80%
Kingdoms Of Amalur: Reckoning	215	70%
The King Of Fighters XII	182	82%
The King Of Fighters XIII	213	76%
Knights Contract	202	53%
Kung Fu Panda 2	207	20%
Kung Fu Rider	196	65%
Lair	158	52%
LA Noire	206	91%
Last Rebellion	191	42%
Legend Of Spyro: Dawn Of The Dragon	174	54%
Legendary	173	62%
Lego Batman	173	65%
Lego Batman 2	221	80%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 1-4	194	79%
Lego Harry Potter: Years 5-7	213	67%
Lego Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures	167	73%
Lego Indiana Jones 2: The Adventure Continues	187	71%
Lego Pirates Of The Caribbean	206	76%
Lego Rock Band	187	75%
Lego Star Wars: The Complete Saga	160	76%
Lego Star Wars III: The Clone Wars	204	79%
Lego: The Lord Of The Rings	227	85%
Leisure Suit Larry: Box Office Bust	180	24%
LittleBigPlanet	172	94%
LittleBigPlanet 2	201	96%
LittleBigPlanet: Karting	225	85%
Lollipop Chainsaw	221	72%
London 2012	221	45%
The Lord Of The Rings: Aragorn's Quest	199	60%
The Lord Of The Rings: Conquest	175	52%
The Lord Of The Rings: War In The North	213	42%
Lost Planet 2	192	75%
Lost Planet: Extreme Condition	163	69%
Lost: The Video Game	164	38%
Madagascar 3	224	39%
Madden NFL 07	151	82%
Madden NFL 08	157	82%
Madden NFL 09	170	83%
Madden NFL 10	184	82%
Madden NFL 11	196	84%
Madden NFL 12	209	85%
Madden NFL 13	223	86%
Mafia II	196	81%
MAG	189	68%
Majin And The Forsaken Kingdom	199	72%
Marvel vs Capcom 3	202	88%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance	151	64%
Marvel Ultimate Alliance 2	185	57%
Max Anarchy*	223	70%
Max Payne 3	219	77%
Mass Effect 2	201	97%
Mass Effect 3	216	93%
 Despite having an arguably disappointing ending, this BioWare RPG is still a must for any serious collection.		
Medal Of Honor	198	86%
Medal Of Honor Airborne	161	85%
Medal Of Honor: Warfighter	225	72%
Medieval Moves	213	47%
Mercenaries 2: World In Flames	171	78%
Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance	228	91%
 <i>Metal Gear Rising: Revengeance</i> is another world-class entry in gaming's most fundamentally playable genre.		
Metal Gear Solid 4	167	92%

game	issue	score
Metal Gear Solid HD Collection	214	91%
Mobile Suit Gundam: Crossfire	151	37%
Michael Jackson: The Experience	205	58%
Midnight Club: Los Angeles	173	84%
Mindjack	202	38%
Mini Ninjas	184	80%
Mirror's Edge	173	71%
ModNation Racers	192	90%
Monster Madness	170	78%
Mortal Kombat	205	81%
Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe	173	68%
MotoGP 08	172	65%
MotoGP 09/10	190	77%
MotoGP 10/11	204	64%
MotorStorm	151	92%
MotorStorm: Apocalypse	203	76%
MotorStorm: Pacific Rift	172	93%
Mud: FIM Motocross Championship	217	50%
MX vs ATV: Alive	206	42%
MX vs ATV Reflex	189	68%
MX vs ATV Untamed	164	58%
nail'd	201	61%
Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm	174	59%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS Generations	217	53%
Naruto Shippuden: UNS 3	230	85%
NASCAR 08	157	38%
Naughty Bear	195	64%
NBA 07	153	33%
NBA 2K7	151	76%
NBA 2K8	172	71%
NBA 2K10	186	79%
NBA 2K11	199	82%
NBA 2K12	211	88%
NBA 2K13	224	88%
NBA Jam	200	68%
NBA Live 08	158	59%
NBA Live 09	170	81%
NBA Street: Homecourt	151	68%
Need For Speed Carbon	151	76%
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit	199	91%
Need For Speed: Most Wanted	225	95%
 <i>Need For Speed: Most Wanted</i> is easily the best arcade racer of this generation. We absolutely love it.		
Need For Speed ProStreet	161	86%
Need For Speed Shift	184	81%
Need For Speed: The Run	213	63%
Need For Speed Undercover	173	75%
NeverDead	215	39%
Nier	192	54%
Ni No Kuni: Wrath Of The White Witch	227	85%
NHL 2K7	151	80%
NHL 2K9	172	67%
NHL 2K10	186	70%
NHL 09	170	88%
NHL 10	184	85%
NHL 11	198	89%
NHL 12	210	78%
NHL 13	223	74%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma	154	88%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2	184	82%
Ninja Gaiden 3	217	63%
No More Heroes: Heroes' Paradise	206	89%
One Piece: Pirate Warriors	224	69%
Operation Flashpoint: Dragon Rising	185	78%
Operation Flashpoint: Red River	205	75%
The Orange Box	161	93%
Overlord: Raising Hell	167	65%
Overlord II	181	68%
Pain	183	69%
PES 2008	159	70%
PES 2009	172	80%
PES 2010	185	72%
PES 2011	197	73%
PES 2012	210	74%
Phineas & Ferb: Across The 2nd Dimension	211	66%
PixelJunk Racers	160	74%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
PlayStation Move Heroes	204	54%

*denotes import review

TOP TEN FIGHTING GAMES



1 Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition



2 Virtua Fighter 5 Final Showdown



3 Persona 4 Arena



4 Tekken Tag Tournament 2



5 Ultimate Marvel Vs Capcom 3



6 BlazBlue: Continuum Shift



7 SoulCalibur V



8 Super Street Fighter IV



9 Darkstalkers Resurrection



10 Arcana Heart 3

GAMES WE LIKE MORE THAN WE SHOULD



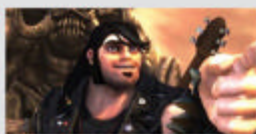
ASURA'S WRATH

Okay, it's not so much a game as it is a really long quick-time event (a long-time event?) but it's so over the top and properly mental that we love it to bits. It's like playing *Dragonball Z* but even more macho and ridiculous.



DISGAEA 3: ABSENCE OF JUSTICE

Not that we are implying *Disgaea 3* is a bad game – it's wonderful and got a great score. But when we saw we like it, we mean we *really* like it. Don't ask us how many hours we've put into this series – it's a depressing and sobering statistic.



BRÜTAL LEGEND

It's a bit naff and the strategy bits are bloody rubbish, but *Brütal Legend* has awesome voice acting, great dialogue and one of the best and most metal soundtracks in gaming. For that, we love it. CANT. STOP. THE. PAINKILLERRRRRR.



SPEC OPS: THE LINE

As an overall game it's only average, but as an exploration and deconstruction of shooting games as well as war on a broader scale, *Spec Ops* succeeds. Everyone should experience the harrowing campaign. It might just change the way you think about videogames.



WWE '13

Yes it's crap but we love wrestling and until *Fire Pro* comes to PS3, this is the best we have. Hopefully 2K taking hold of the licence will result in some big changes for the franchise, but we aren't holding out too much hope.

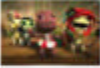
game	issue	score
POTC: At World's End	154	48%
Port Royale 3: Pirates & Merchants	224	54%
Portal 2	205	95%
Another exceptional release from Valve, gamers are going to be talking about Portal 2 for a long time to come.		
Prince Of Persia	174	83%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	193	68%
Prince Of Persia Trilogy	200	88%
Prison Break: The Conspiracy	191	40%
Prototype	181	76%
Prototype 2	219	75%
Puma After Hours Athletes	214	58%
Pure	171	80%
Pure Football	194	69%
Quantum Of Solace	175	57%
Quantum Theory	197	29%
Race Driver: GRID	167	85%
Ratchet & Clank: Q-Force	227	52%
Racket Sports	198	37%
Rage	211	60%
Rainbow Six Vegas	155	88%
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	164	78%
Rango	203	54%
Ratchet & Clank: A Crack In Time	186	82%
Ratchet & Clank: All 4 One	211	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Tools Of Destruction	160	72%
Ratchet & Clank Trilogy HD	212	88%
Rayman Origins	222	80%
Red Dead Redemption	193	92%
Relocates the familiar GTA formula to a superbly realised new setting and, in many ways, is unlike anything else as a result.		
Red Dead Redemption: Undead Nightmare	199	87%
Red Faction: Armageddon	207	62%
Red Faction: Guerrilla	180	80%
Resident Evil: Operation Raccoon City	217	33%
Resident Evil 5	177	86%
Resident Evil 5: Gold Edition	190	86%
Resident Evil 6	223	88%
Resistance: Fall Of Man	151	83%
Resistance 2	173	90%
Resistance 3	210	88%
Resonance Of Fate	191	79%
Ridge Racer 7	151	75%
Ridge Racer Unbounded	217	67%
Rise Of The Argonauts	176	58%
Risen 2: Dark Waters	222	64%
Rock Band	169	94%
Rock Band 2	179	96%
Rock Band 3	199	84%
Rocksmith	223	78%
Rogue Warrior	188	09%
Rugby World Cup 2011	209	49%
Rune Factory Oceans	220	51%
R.U.S.E.	197	82%
The Saboteur	187	67%
Sacred 2: Fallen Angel	180	76%
Saints Row 2	172	79%
Saints Row: The Third	211	88%
SBK Generations	220	51%
Saint Seiya: Sanctuary Battle	216	52%
Saw	186	52%
Saw II: Flesh & Blood	198	36%
Sega Mega Drive Ultimate Collection	177	85%
SBK 08	172	55%
SBK 2011	206	70%
SBK Generations	220	54%
SBK X: Superbike World Championship	193	67%
Sega Rally	158	92%
Sengoku Basara: Samurai Heroes	198	76%
Shadows Of The Damned	207	79%
Shaun White Skateboarding	198	70%
Shaun White Snowboarding	173	72%
Shellshock 2: Blood Trails	177	32%
Shift 2: Unleashed	204	66%
The Shoot	199	76%
Silent Hill: Downpour	217	81%
Silent Hill HD Collection	217	76%
Silent Hill: Homecoming	174	64%
The Simpsons Game	160	82%
The Sims 3	199	87%
The Sims 3: Pets	212	70%
SingStar	159	80%
SingStar Guitar	199	70%
SingStar Pop Edition	179	81%
Singularity	195	80%

game	issue	score
Skate	159	86%
Skate 2	175	82%
Skate 3	192	86%
Sleeping Dogs	222	80%
The Sly Collection	200	84%
Sly Cooper: Thieves In Time	230	60%
Sniper Elite V2	218	52%
Sniper: Ghost Warrior	206	45%
Sniper Ghost Warrior 2	230	55%
SOCOM: Special Forces	205	63%
Sonic & Sega All-Stars Racing	190	78%
Sonic & All-Stars Racing Transformed	227	88%
Sonic Generations	212	70%
Sonic The Hedgehog	151	52%
Sonic Unleashed	175	48%
Sorcery	219	76%
SoulCalibur IV	169	94%
SoulCalibur V	214	80%
Spec Ops: The Line	220	59%
Spider-Man 3	155	33%
Spider-Man: Edge Of Time	212	38%
Spider-Man: Shattered Dimensions	197	69%
Spider-Man: Web Of Shadows	173	55%
Splatterhouse	200	58%
Splinter Cell Double Agent	153	79%
Split/Second: Velocity	192	90%
Just beating Blur to the chequered flag, Split/Second is a wonderfully intense racing game in the Burnout mould.		
Sports Champions	196	83%
Sports Champions 2	225	65%
SSX	216	45%
Starhawk	219	81%
Star Ocean: The Last Hope International	190	63%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	171	65%
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed II	199	61%
Start The Party!	196	72%
Stormrise	178	51%
Stranglehold	159	65%
Street Fighter IV	176	95%
Street Fighter X Tekken	217	83%
Super Street Fighter IV: Arcade Edition	207	88%
Stuntman: Ignition	157	82%
SuperCar Challenge	183	66%
Superstars V8: Next Challenge	190	55%
Superstars V8 Racing	181	63%
Super Street Fighter IV	191	90%
Supremacy MMA	211	40%
Syndicate	216	78%
Tales Of Graces f	222	77%
Tekken 6	184	94%
Tekken Hybrid	213	79%
Tekken Tag Tournament 2	223	90%
Far from being the sideshow attraction the word 'spin-off' might suggest, Tekken Tag Tournament 2 is actually pretty damn brilliant.		
Test Drive Ferrari Racing Legends	221	60%
Test Drive Unlimited 2	203	62%
The Amazing Spider-Man	221	61%
The Testament Of Sherlock Holmes	224	55%
Thor: God Of Thunder	206	38%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 07	151	88%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08	158	73%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09	171	86%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 10	181	69%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 11	194	60%
Tiger Woods PGA 12: The Masters	204	65%
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 13	217	70%
Time Crisis 4	166	69%
Time Crisis: Razing Storm	199	58%
TimeShift	162	72%
TNA Impact!	171	71%
Tom Clancy's EndWar	173	80%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X.	177	75%
Tom Clancy's H.A.W.X. 2	196	69%
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Trilogy HD	210	78%
Tomb Raider	230	90%
Lara returns in this excellent reboot, but she doesn't have a very nice time. Her survivalist origin story is grim, daring, and brilliant.		
Tomb Raider Trilogy	204	86%
Tomb Raider: Underworld	173	83%
Tony Hawk's Project 8	151	85%
Tony Hawk's Proving Ground	160	72%
Tony Hawk: Ride	188	52%
Top Gun: Hard Lock	218	45%
Top Spin 3	168	71%
Top Spin 4	203	60%

game	issue	score
Tornado Outbreak	186	56%
Toy Story 3	195	82%
Transformers: Dark Of The Moon	208	64%
Transformers: Fall Of Cybertron	223	73%
Transformers: Revenge Of The Fallen	182	41%
Transformers: The Game	156	34%
Transformers: War For Cybertron	194	80%
Trinity: Souls Of Zill O'll	202	56%
Trinity Universe	194	61%
Tron Evolution	200	17%
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	165	40%
Turok	163	46%
TV Superstars	199	53%
Twisted Metal	216	68%
Two Worlds II	203	64%
UEFA Euro 2008	165	62%
UFC Undisputed 2009	180	90%
UFC Undisputed 2010	193	88%
UFC Undisputed 3	215	82%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	212	78%
Uncharted: Drake's Fortune	161	87%
Uncharted 2: Among Thieves	185	96%
Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception	212	90%
Fans of the series won't be disappointed as Drake returns with some exceptional set pieces and superb action.		
Unreal Tournament III	162	88%
Untold Legends: Dark Kingdom	151	54%
Valkyria Chronicles	173	82%
Vancouver 2010	189	76%
Vanquish	197	93%
A brilliant surprise from the developer of Bayonetta and easily one of the best (and toughest) games we've played.		
Viking: Battle For Asgard	165	74%
Virtua Fighter 5	151	83%
Virtua Tennis 2009	180	80%
Virtua Tennis 3	150	91%
Virtua Tennis 4	205	79%
Wanted: Weapons Of Fate	179	63%
Warhammer 40,000: Space Marine	210	51%
Warhawk	157	84%
Warriors: Legends Of Troy	202	14%
Warriors Orochi 3	217	59%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Way Of The Samurai 3	190	16%
Wet	184	41%
Wheelman	178	72%
Where The Wild Things Are	188	56%
White Knight Chronicles	190	55%
White Knight Chronicles II	207	49%
Wolfenstein	183	72%
Wonderbook: Book Of Spells	226	80%
World Snooker Championship 2007	151	56%
Worms Collection	224	85%
WRC: FIA World Rally Championship	197	76%
WRC 2: FIA World Rally Championship	211	63%
WRC 3 FIA World Rally Championship	225	75%
WSC REAL 09: World Snooker Championship	177	67%
WSC Real 11	204	69%
WWE All Stars	204	82%
WWE Legends Of WrestleMania	178	80%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2008	159	88%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2009	173	74%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2010	185	77%
WWE SmackDown vs Raw 2011	199	63%
WWE '12	212	50%
WWE 13	225	55%
X-Blades	178	54%
XCOM: Enemy Unknown	224	94%
Thinking, planning, failing and dying is back in fashion: XCOM is a phenomenal remaking of a classic title and an instant classic in its own right.		
X-Men Destiny	211	35%
X-Men Origins: Wolverine	179	71%
Yakuza: Dead Souls	216	60%
Yakuza 3	191	80%
Yakuza 4	203	79%
Yoostar 2: In The Movies	204	60%
Zone Of The Enders HD Collection	226	81%

PS VITA LISTING

A-Men	217	70%
Army Corps Of Hell	217	64%

game	issue	score
Assassin's Creed III: Liberation	225	76%
Everybody's Golf	215	86%
BlazBlue: Continuum Shift Extend	216	85%
Call Of Duty: Black Ops Declassified	227	18%
Dokuro	230	71%
Earth Defense Force 2017 Portable	230	82%
Escape Plan	216	81%
FIFA Football	216	80%
Gravity Rush	219	86%
Hustle Kings	216	81%
LittleBigPlanet	223	93%
 If the community is up to the task, LBP Vita's create mode has massive amounts of potential.		
Little Deviants	215	69%
Lumines Electric Symphony	216	85%
MGS HD Collection	221	70%
ModNation Racers: Road Trip	215	59%
Mortal Kombat	219	83%
MotorStorm RC	217	81%
New Little King's Story	224	70%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma Plus	217	72%
Ninja Gaiden Sigma 2 Plus	230	60%
Orgarhythm	230	55%
PlayStation All-Stars Battle Royale	225	80%
Persona 4: Golden	228	94%
 Persona 4: Golden is one of the best RPGs around, with great characterisation, a gripping story and smart combat mechanics.		
Puddle	222	82%
Rayman Origins	216	84%
Reality Fighters	215	52%
Resistance: Burning Skies	219	54%
Ridge Racer	216	48%
Silent Hill: Book Of Memories	225	32%
Sound Shapes	223	88%
Super Monkey Ball: Banana Splitz	224	78%
Sumoni: Demon Arts	230	46%
Super Stardust Delta	216	84%
Touch My Katamari	216	83%
Ultimate Marvel vs Capcom 3	216	80%
Uncharted: Golden Abyss	215	83%
Unit 13	216	67%
Virtua Tennis 4: World Tour Edition	215	81%
Virtue's Last Reward	227	84%
WipEout 2048	215	87%

PS STORE LISTING



1942: Joint Strike	170	74%
3-On-3 NHL Arcade	177	62%
After Burner Climax	193	91%
Age Of Booty	172	81%
Alien Breed: Impact	196	80%
Alien Breed 2: Assault	201	82%
Alien Breed 3: Descent	204	61%
All Zombies Must Die!	214	64%
Amy	215	19%
Anarchy: Rush Hour	194	73%
Aqua Panic	193	68%
Arc The Lad	215	79%
Armageddon Riders	207	65%
Atelier Meruru: The Apprentice Of Arland	221	35%
Atelier Ayesha: The Alchemist Of Dust	230	60%
Back To The Future: It's About Time	204	71%
The Baoning	210	72%
Battlefield 1943	182	89%
Beat Hazard Ultra	213	79%
Beat Sketcher	201	85%
Beyond Good & Evil HD	207	86%
Bishi Bashi Special!	175	61%
Bionic Commando Rearmed	169	88%
Bionic Commando Rearmed 2	203	61%
Blacklight: Tango Down	200	64%
Blade Kitten	197	72%
Blast Factor	152	72%
Blokus	202	54%
BloodRayne: Betrayal	211	62%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode I	188	65%
Blue Toad Murder Files: The Mysteries Of Little Riddle Episode II	188	61%
Blue Toad Murder Files Episodes 4/5/6	193	70%
Bomberman Ultra	185	82%
Braid	188	93%
Burn Zombie Burn	178	85%

game	issue	score
Burnout Crash	211	79%
Call Of Duty Classic	188	90%
The Cave	230	77%
Calling All Cars	155	81%
Castle Crashers	200	88%
Castlevania: Harmony Of Despair	212	67%
Catan	195	85%
Chime Super Deluxe	203	80%
Comet Crash	186	84%
Comix Zone	210	62%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	16	79%
Command & Conquer Red Alert: Retaliation	176	55%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert 3	168	70%
Commander's Challenge	185	68%
Command & Conquer	175	44%
Cool Boarders	173	57%
Cool Boarders 2	175	31%
Costume Quest	199	70%
Counter-Strike: Global Offensive	223	89%
Crash Bandicoot	172	77%
Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped	174	82%
Crash Commando	174	80%
Crash Team Racing	170	79%
Crazy Machines Elements	210	71%
Crazy Taxi	200	80%
Crescent Pale Mist	200	70%
Critter Crunch	188	91%
Crystal Defenders	184	48%
Cubixx HD	207	76%
Dark Mist	164	53%
Darkstalkers Resurrection	230	82%
Dead Nation	201	86%
Dead Space: Extraction	203	88%
Dead Space: Ignition	199	47%
Death Spank	195	83%
Derrick The Deathfin	227	79%
Destruction Derby	01	80%
.detuned	186	50%
Deus Ex	219	83%
Digger Dash	186	52%
Diner HD	190	66%
Double Dragon Neon	224	37%
Driver	171	90%
DropItz	184	91%
Earthworm Jim HD	196	89%
Eat Them!	202	60%
echochrome	169	85%
echochrome II	202	83%
Elfunk	170	45%
Euforia	212	85%
Explodemon	203	70%
Fat Princess	183	65%
Fatal Inertia EX	168	65%
FIFA 09 Ultimate Team	178	61%
Final Fight: Double Impact	193	90%
Final Fantasy VII	181	96%
Final Fantasy VIII	190	90%
Final Fantasy IX	195	90%
Flight Control HD	198	85%
Flock!	179	70%
flOw	151	90%
Flower	176	85%
Frogger: Hyper Arcade Edition	221	55%
Frogger Returns	190	35%
From Dust	211	82%
Funky Lab Rat	201	70%
G-Police	27	84%
Galaxy Fight	215	27%
Gatling Gears	207	62%
Geon	175	71%
Go! Puzzle	152	58%
God Hand	216	83%
Gotham City Impostors	216	78%
Grand Theft Auto III	224	90%

 GTA III shuffles onto the slowly growing list of PSN classics, and still illustrates why Rockstar's original 3D take on the series was so influential.

Gran Turismo HD	150	75%
Gravity Crash	187	85%
Greed Corp	191	75%
Greg Hastings Paintball 2	219	22%
GTI Club+	174	72%
Guardians Of Middle-Earth	227	71%
Gundemonium Collection	197	80%
Gunstar Heroes	181	85%
Hamsterball	194	72%
Hardcore 4x4	15	81%
Hasbro Family Game Night	187	60%

game	issue	score
Heavy Weapon	187	75%
High Velocity Bowling	163	50%
Hi-Octane	178	64%
The House Of The Dead 4	218	82%
Hustle Kings	190	87%
Hyperbolloid HD	188	70%
I Am Alive	217	64%
inFamous Collection	224	85%
inFamous: Festival Of Blood	212	76%
Inferno Pool	181	81%
International Track & Field	171	80%
Interpol: The Trail Of Doctor Chaos	185	48%
Invincible Tiger: The Legend Of Han Tao	185	70%
Jet Rider 2	176	71%
Joe Danger	194	96%
Journey	216	87%
Judge Dredd	18	19%
Jumping Flash	172	55%
Jurassic Park: The Game	214	32%
Kick-Ass The Game	194	60%
Killzone HD	225	65%
Kula World	172	71%
Kung-Fu Live	201	42%
Landit Bandit	195	66%
Lara Croft And The Guardian Of Light	198	90%
The Last Guy	171	91%
Lead & Gold: Gangs Of The Wild West	193	65%
Lemmings	151	79%
Limbo	209	90%
Linger In Shadows	173	69%
LocoRoco Cocoreccho!	159	80%
Lumines Supernova	178	90%
Madden NFL Arcade	188	58%
Mad Riders	220	70%
Magic Carpet	179	65%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers	202	84%
Magic: The Gathering: Duels Of The Planeswalkers 2012	208	70%
Marvel vs Capcom 2	182	90%
Matt Hazard: Blood Bath And Beyond	189	69%
Medal Of Honor: Frontline	210	52%
MediEvil	173	45%
Mega Man 9	172	75%
Mega Man 10	192	82%
Metal Gear Solid	187	93%
Metal Gear Solid Online	175	45%
Microbot	202	51%
Monkey Island 2: Special Edition	195	94%
Motorhead	173	60%
Namco Museum Essentials	193	60%
Naruto Shippuden: Kizuna Drive	205	42%
NBA Jam: On Fire Edition	212	64%
Nights Into Dreams...	224	75%
Noby Noby Boy	177	85%
Nucleus	155	82%
Numblast	183	60%
N20	37	70%
Oddworld: Stranger's Wrath HD	214	86%
Okami HD	225	90%
 Okami is lovely, just as we remember it, and has been given a treatment that takes it far beyond the muffled visual quality of the PS2 original.		
Outland	207	72%
OutRun Online Arcade	180	80%
Pac-Man Championship Edition DX	201	91%
Payday: The Heist	213	88%
Pain	183	69%
Peggle	189	94%
Pinballistik	215	75%
PixelJunk 4am	220	40%
PixelJunk Eden	169	67%
PixelJunk Monsters	163	94%
PixelJunk Shooter	187	93%
PixelJunk Shooter 2	204	90%
PixelJunk SideScroller	213	77%
Piyotama	162	62%
Planet Minigolf	196	58%
Polar Panic	190	65%
Populous: The Beginning	46	70%
Prince Of Persia Classic	173	67%
Puddle	216	76%
The Punisher: No Mercy	182	49%
Puzzle Chronicles	194	70%
Puzzle Dimension	208	81%
Puzzle Quest Galactrix	181	68%
Q*bert	58	53%
Quantum Conundrum	221	90%
Rag Doll Kung Fu: Fists Of Plastic	179	83%

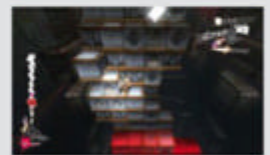
PS3'S BEST GAMES

CATHERINE

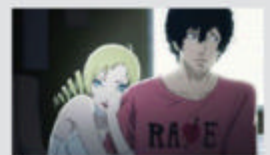
61%, PLAY 215



Far be it from us to disagree with past **Play** writers, but Catherine deserved a slightly higher score than the meagre one it received. It's not perfect but it's utterly unique.



Players control thirty-something waster Vincent as he is torn between his clingy long-term girlfriend and nubile, albeit slightly unhinged, secret fling, conveniently called Katherine and Catherine. What are the odds?



This is a game of two halves. Players see Vincent go through his day, controlling who he talks to and his reactions to texts and questions. Spending time at the bar with different friends is surprisingly relaxing.



Then at night, Vince starts having nightmares and the game becomes a series of fiendishly difficult block puzzles. These get really, really hard, but there's an easy option for those only interested in story.



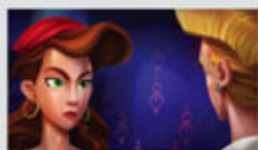
There are flaws, but in offering a mature look at what it means to grow up and the nature of commitment (albeit from an unflattering male perspective), *Catherine* is a unique and intelligent game.

DOWNLOAD THESE 90%+ EDITION



ZEN PINBALL 2

90%, Play 224
It's the best version of the best pinball game ever made. We probably like it more than we should but it's really, really fun. There's a bunch of cool downloadable tables and add-ons too. Help us.



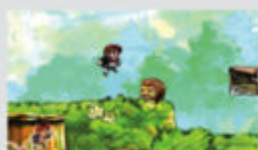
SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND: SPECIAL EDITION

92%, Play 195
It's one of our favourite point-and-click adventure games from our youth, now redrawn in shiny new HD graphics! Huzzah! It's still really funny too, even when we know what's gonna happen.



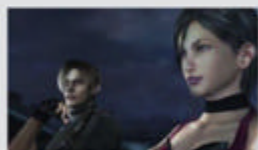
OKAMI HD

90%, Play 225
Every proper gamer worth their salt loves *Okami* because it's proper ace, and now it's in the higher of definitions to boot. There's no longer an excuse for never having played it, so play it!



BRAID

93%, Play 188
It makes our heads hurt, but in a good way. *Braid* features some of the most obtuse time-bending puzzle-platforming around, players having to think way outside the box to get through some of these levels. Our puny minds are no match.



RESIDENT EVIL 4 HD

93%, Play 210
Sure, we've all played *Resi 4* at least five or six times by now, but why not play it again with slightly upscaled visuals and Trophies? You know you want to, and you know you are going to. You are powerless to resist.

game	issue	score
Rampage: World Tour	29	77%
Rainbow Moon	221	68%
Ratchet & Clank: Quest For Booty	170	69%
Rayman	01	76%
Rayman 3 HD	217	77%
Renegade Ops	211	78%
Resident Evil 4 HD	210	93%
Resident Evil Code Veronica X	211	72%
Resident Evil Chronicles HD Collection	221	82%
Retro City Rampage	228	78%
Revenge Of The Wounded Dragons	191	60%
Riff: Everyday Shooter	162	86%
Risk: Factions	202	80%
Rock Band Blitz	223	80%
Rocketbirds: Hardboiled Chicken	212	82%
Rocket Knight	194	74%
Rocketmen: Axis Of Evil	165	63%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 1	194	90%
Sam & Max: The Devil's Playhouse Episode 2	194	92%
Sega Rally Online Arcade	208	74%
Savage Moon	175	87%
Scott Pilgrim vs The World	197	77%
The Secret Of Monkey Island SE	195	92%
Section 8	193	78%
Section 8: Prejudice	209	80%
Shank	197	86%
Shatter	183	91%
Sheep	171	78%
Shoot Many Robots	217	81%
The Simpsons: Arcade Game	216	54%
Siren Blood Curse	170	62%
Skullgirls	218	88%
Skyrim: Dawnguard	230	70%
Skyrim: Dragonborn	230	84%
Smash Cars	184	50%
SOCOM Confrontation	178	55%
Soldner-X 2: Final Prototype	195	70%
Sonic Adventure	198	63%
Sonic Adventure 2	225	69%
Sonic CD	214	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode I	199	82%
Sonic The Hedgehog 4: Episode II	220	40%
Spin Jam	174	32%
Snakeball	176	92%
Stacking	203	88%
Star Trek: D-A-C	189	57%
Star Wars Pinball	230	79%
Street Fighter Alpha: Warrior's Dream	159	57%
Street Fighter III: 3rd Strike Online Edition	209	92%
The best version of one of the best fighting games ever released. Pretty much the best reason to own an arcade stick.		
Street Skater 2	178	40%
Super Puzzle Fighter II HD Turbo Remix	168	78%
Super Rub-A-Dub	151	83%
Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars	177	65%
Super Stardust HD	155	74%
Super Street Fighter II Turbo HD Remix	176	72%
Switchball	191	75%
Swords And Soldiers	199	88%
Syphon Filter	48	93%
Syphon Filter 3	170	80%
Tales Of Monkey Island	196	91%
Tank Battles	186	68%
Tekken HD	150	80%
Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection Online	161	87%
Tetris	202	84%
Theme Hospital	32	80%
Theme Park	174	80%
TMNT: Turtles in Time Re-shelled	186	57%
Tokyo Jungle	223	81%
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six	54	34%
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater HD	223	73%
Top Darts	202	71%
Top Gun	198	53%
Topotai: Spinning Through The Worlds	183	61%
ToyHome	162	31%
Trash Panic	181	79%
Trials Of Topaq	159	50%
Trine	184	85%
Tumble	198	70%
Uncharted: Fight For Fortune	227	83%
Under Siege	207	71%
The Unfinished Swan	225	78%
Uno	189	85%
Vagrant Story	189	82%
Vandal Hearts: Flames Of Judgment	192	87%
Virtua Fighter 5: Final Showdown	220	90%
The Walking Dead: Episode 1	219	89%

*denotes import review

game	issue	score
The Walking Dead Episode 2	221	90%
The Walking Dead: Episode 3	223	86%
Wakeboarding HD	192	65%
Warhawk	225	48%
Warhawk: Operation Fallen Star	171	80%
Watchmen: The End Is Nigh	183	55%
Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?	214	79%
WipEout	01	89%
WipEout HD	172	84%
Wizorb	222	78%
Wolfenstein	181	70%
Wonder Boy In Monster Land	220	50%
Worms	179	91%
Worms 2: Armageddon	198	87%
Worms Battle Islands	201	80%
Worms Crazy Golf	213	82%
Worms: Ultimate Mayhem	217	80%
X-Men Arcade	203	60%
Yars' Revenge	206	57%
Zack Zero	215	73%
Zen Pinball 2	224	90%
Zombie Apocalypse: Never Die Alone	213	69%
Zuma	182	78%

PSP LISTING



The 3rd Birthday	203	80%
300: March To Glory	152	59%
Ace Combat X	147	72%
Ace Combat: Joint Assault	194	79%
After Burner: Black Falcon	152	82%
Ape Academy 2	145	52%
Ape Escape P	140	37%
Army Of Two: The 40th Day	190	45%
Assassin's Creed: Bloodlines	187	77%
Astonishia Story	142	68%
Beaterator	186	72%
Blade Dancer: Lineage Of Light	145	45%
BlazBlue: Calamity Trigger Portable	194	84%
Blood Bowl	184	53%
Bomberman	150	83%
Boulder Dash: Rocks!	165	69%
Breath Of Fire III	138	82%
Brothers In Arms: D-Day	149	69%
Burnout Dominator	153	65%
Burnout Legends	134	94%
Buzz! Brain Bender	175	68%
Capcom Classics Collection Reloaded	147	80%
Capcom Classics Collection Remixed	141	72%
Cars	143	60%
Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles	163	78%
Championship Manager	137	65%
Championship Manager 2006	140	32%
Cid The Dummy	180	32%
Coded Arms	134	53%
Call Of Duty: Roads To Victory	153	69%
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	134	84%
The Con	153	59%
Corpse Party: Book Of Shadows	230	54%
Crisis Core: Final Fantasy VII	167	87%
Crush	154	80%
The Cube	153	64%
Dante's Inferno	191	76%
Dead Or Alive: Paradise	192	56%
Disgaea: Afternoon Of Darkness	161	92%
Dissidia: Final Fantasy	184	60%
Dissidia Q12 Final Fantasy	203	79%
Disgaea 2: Dark Hero Days	190	87%
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai 2	154	50%
Driver 76	154	68%
Dungeons & Dragons: Tactics	159	55%
Dungeon Siege: Throne Of Agony	148	85%
Dynasty Warriors: Strikeforce	179	69%
EA Replay	147	74%
echochrome	169	85%
echoshift	191	73%
Everybody's Golf 2	167	86%
Everybody's Tennis	195	88%
Every Extend Extra	145	84%
Exit	138	65%
The Eye Of Judgment: Legends	191	57%
EyePet	199	77%
F1 2009	187	66%
Fate/Extra	219	60%
Field Commander	145	83%
FIFA 06	136	43%
FIFA 07	147	81%

game	issue	score
FIFA 11	198	69%
FIFA World Cup 2010	193	65%
Fired Up	134	60%
Final Fantasy	164	63%
Final Fantasy III	224	44%
Final Fantasy IV: The Complete Collection	204	80%
Final Fantasy Tactics	159	86%
FlatOut: Head On	164	79%
Football Manager 2007	147	62%
Football Manager Handheld 2008	161	49%
Football Manager Handheld 2010	187	60%
Formula One 06	143	78%
Frantix	136	36%
Gangs Of London	144	65%
Ghost Recon Advanced Warfighter 2	157	42%
Ghost Recon Predator	200	60%
Ghostbusters: The Video Game	188	55%
Ghostbusters: Sanctum Of Slime	204	51%
Gitaroo Man Lives!	144	79%
Gladiator Begins	206	52%
Go! Sudoku	137	45%
The Godfather: Mob Wars	136	66%
Gods Eater Burst	202	88%
God Of War: Chains Of Olympus	165	84%
God Of War: Ghost Of Sparta	199	79%
Gradius Collection	144	80%
Gran Turismo	184	85%
Grand Theft Auto: Chinatown Wars	185	95%
GTA: Liberty City Stories	135	95%
GTA: Vice City Stories	147	96%
Half-Minute Hero	191	87%
Hard Corps: Uprising	204	78%
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	136	69%
Helboy: Science Of Evil	170	60%
Holy Invasion Of Privacy, Badman! What Did I Do To Deserve This?	186	73%
Hot Pixel	155	73%
Indiana Jones And The Staff Of Kings	181	60%
Infected	141	68%
Innocent Life: A Futuristic Harvest Moon	154	70%
International Athletics	170	40%
Invizimals	187	71%
Jak And Daxter: The Lost Frontier	187	59%
Juiced: Eliminator	141	70%
Juiced 2: Hot Import Nights	160	80%
Kao Challengers	137	60%
Killzone: Liberation	146	83%
Kingdom Hearts: Birth By Sleep	196	88%
The Legend Of Heroes: Trails In The Sky	214	75%
Lemmings	138	63%
LittleBigPlanet	186	90%
LocoRoco	143	94%
LocoRoco 2	173	82%
LocoRoco Midnight Carnival	186	81%
Lord Of Arcana	202	65%
The Lord Of The Rings: Tactics	136	66%
Lumines II	137	74%
Madden NFL 06	137	74%
Marvel Trading Cards	155	38%
Me And My Katamari	138	86%
Medal Of Honor Heroes	147	72%
MediEvil: Resurrection	134	53%
Mercury Meltdown	145	66%
Metal Slug Anthology	150	91%
Metal Gear Acid 2	138	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Peace Walker	193	92%
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops	150	91%
Miami Vice	144	82%
Micro Machines V4	142	71%
Might & Magic: Clash Of Heroes	205	84%
ModNation Racers	193	70%
Monster Hunter Freedom	140	81%
Monster Hunter Freedom 2	157	59%
Monster Hunter Freedom Unite	181	77%
Moon Diver	205	46%
MotoGP	146	75%
Motorstorm: Arctic Edge	184	72%
Mytran Wars	179	85%
Namco Museum Battle Collection	136	68%
Naruto Shippuden Legends	185	46%
Naruto Ultimate Ninja Heroes 2	169	46%
NBA Ballers: Rebound	139	61%
Need For Speed Undercover	175	57%
No Heroes Allowed	199	69%
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	139	93%
PaRappa The Rapper	155	88%
Patapon	163	86%
Patapon 2	177	87%
Patapon 3	205	81%
Patchwork Heroes	192	85%

game	issue	score
Persona 2: Innocent Sin	214	65%
Pirates Of The Caribbean	143	52%
PixelJunk Monster Deluxe	185	86%
Pro Evolution Soccer 2008	163	77%
Pocket Racers	144	49%
PoPoLoCRoIS	142	71%
Power Stone Collection	145	88%
PQ – Practical Intelligence Quotient	141	52%
Prince Of Persia Revelations	138	69%
Prince Of Persia: The Forgotten Sands	194	52%
Prinny: Can I Really Be The Hero?	181	80%
PSN Collection: Power Pack	173	70%
PSN Collection: Puzzle Pack	173	54%
Pursuit Force	134	83%
Pursuit Force: Extreme Justice	159	76%
Puzzle Chronicles	190	61%
Puzzle Quest	153	66%
R-Type Tactics	170	74%
Rainbow Six Vegas	156	78%
Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters	154	78%
Red Faction: Battlegrounds	205	78%
Rengoku 2	144	72%
Resistance: Retribution	177	76%
Ridge Racer 2	145	78%
Ridge Racer	132	91%
Rock Band Unplugged	181	92%
Rocky Balboa	150	68%
Secret Agent Clank	169	79%
Sega Mega Drive Collection	177	79%
Sega Rally	158	90%
Shin Megami Tensei: Persona 3 Portable	206	78%
Shinobido: Tales Of The Ninja	150	60%
Silent Hill Origins	160	87%
Silent Hill: Shattered Memories	190	52%
The Sims 2	137	71%
Slam Bolt Scrappers	204	73%
Smash Court Tennis	154	58%
SOCOM Fire Team 2	154	70%
SOCOM: Fireteam Bravo 3	190	71%
SOCOM: Tactical Strike	160	85%
SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	140	69%
Sonic Rivals	147	70%
Sonic Rivals 2	162	35%
SoulCalibur: Broken Destiny	183	92%
Spider-Man 3	162	32%
Spinout	149	81%
Splinter Cell: Essentials	139	71%
Split/Second: Velocity	200	71%
SSX On Tour	138	76%
Star Ocean: Second Evolution	178	78%
Star Trek: Tactical Assault	148	59%
Star Wars Battlefront II	137	74%
Star Wars Battlefront: Elite Squadron	187	65%
Star Wars: Lethal Alliance	148	69%
Star Wars: Renegade Squadron	160	78%
Street Fighter Alpha 3 Max	138	70%
Street Riders	140	29%
Super Monkey Ball Adventure	142	54%
Swarm	204	78%
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	140	90%
Tekken 6	187	90%
Tekken: Dark Resurrection	143	92%
Tactics Ogre: Let Us Cling Together	202	81%
Tenchu: Shadow Assassins	179	71%
Tenchu: Time Of The Assassins	146	51%
TNA Impact! Cross The Line	189	58%
TOCA 3	152	70%
Tokobot	140	79%
Tomb Raider: Anniversary	156	81%
Tomb Raider: Legend	140	72%
Twisted Metal Head-On	134	54%
UFC Undisputed 2010	197	80%
Ultimate Ghosts 'N Goblins	145	88%
Undead Knights	189	46%
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code	140	59%
Valhalla Knights	158	49%
Valkyria Chronicles 2	196	87%
Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	153	78%
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	140	82%
Virtua Tennis 3	152	88%
Warhammer 40,000: Squad Command	161	70%
What Did I Do To Deserve This My Lord? 2	192	78%
WipEout Pulse	159	86%
WipEout Pure	138	91%
World Of Pool	156	43%
World Tour Poker	141	67%
World Tour Soccer 2	142	40%
Worms: Open Warfare 2	157	80%
WWE SmackDown! vs Raw 2006	137	84%
WWE SmackDown! vs Raw 2007	147	80%
World Rally Championship	134	67%



LUKE ALBIGÉS

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?):

SOUL SACRIFICE

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?):

Monster Hunter isn't on Vita (yet)

I LOVE HUNTING. It's kinda what I do. So until Capcom slinks embarrassed out of Nintendo's bed and announces *Monster Hunter* for Vita (or, better yet, PS4 as well), I'm stuck with the clones. *God Eater* was okay, as was *Ragnarok Odyssey*. But Keiji Inafune's *Soul Sacrifice* is by far my favourite yet, a grim and inventive Gothic twist on the usual team-up-and-kill-big-things format. Part *Dark Souls*, part *Monster Hunter*, all awesome. Dust off your Vita and get involved. Well, unless you hate really good games...



PLAYING THE PLAYLIST

Sam knocks back Vigors while Luke goes hunting beasts. Business as usual, then...



SAM SMITH

WHAT (HAVE THEY BEEN PLAYING?):

BIOSHOCK INFINITE

WHY (WAS IT CHOSEN?):

It's bloody marvellous

I DON'T LIKE gushing over games or handing out really high scores because I'm a heartless bastard, but *BioShock Infinite* has awoken the wonderer within me and I'm starting to wonder if perhaps one day I too will learn to love again. Seriously, it's ace. After beating it for review I've jumped straight back in on the rock-hard 1999 mode and I'm still loving every second. The gunplay is fast and brutal and the story is one of the most intelligent pieces of fiction we've ever seen in a video game. Oh god, gushing again. Sorry.



PLAY'S BEST GAMES IF YOU LIKE...



Mass murder

PLAY: DYNASTY WARRIORS 7

Say what you will about *Dynasty Warriors* but few other games let you kill thousands of dudes in a single battle without breaking a sweat. Who needs historical accuracy when you have lovely, lovely violence?



Spiffy hats

PLAY: LA NOIRE

People from the past are a heckly heck lot more stylish than us modern folks, as is evident in *La Noire*. A variety of nifty suits, stylish hats and retro cars makes this one good-looking murder mystery.



Robert Carlyle

PLAY: CASTLEVANIA: LORDS OF SHADOW

Robert Carlyle is Gabriel Belmont in the surprisingly-good *Castlevania* re-imagining. It plays a bit like *God Of War* but has its own gothic charm and some great combat. Can't wait for the sequel!



Van Halen

PLAY: GUITAR HERO: VAN HALEN

The only game on PS3 with Van Halen in the title, and a must-have for fans of the spandex-clad rockers. Only David Lee Roth songs though, with nothing from the Sammy Hagar era – poop!



Nostalgia

PLAY: SEGA MEGA DRIVE ULTIMATE COLLECTION

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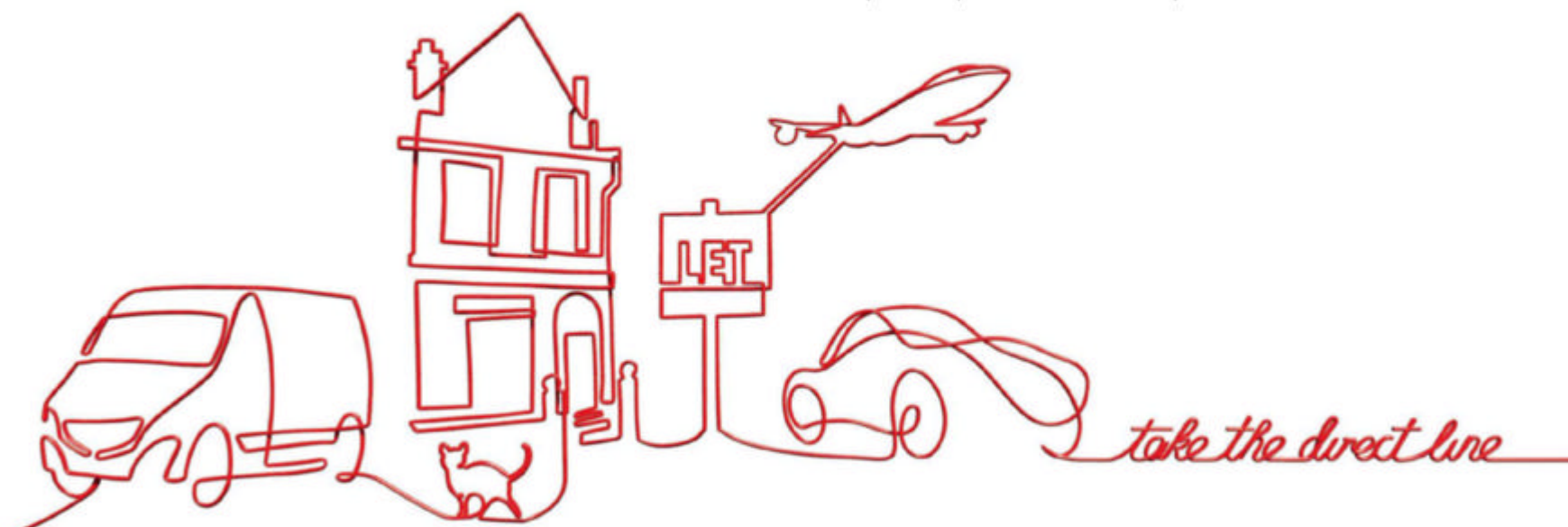
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BLINDSIDING"**
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